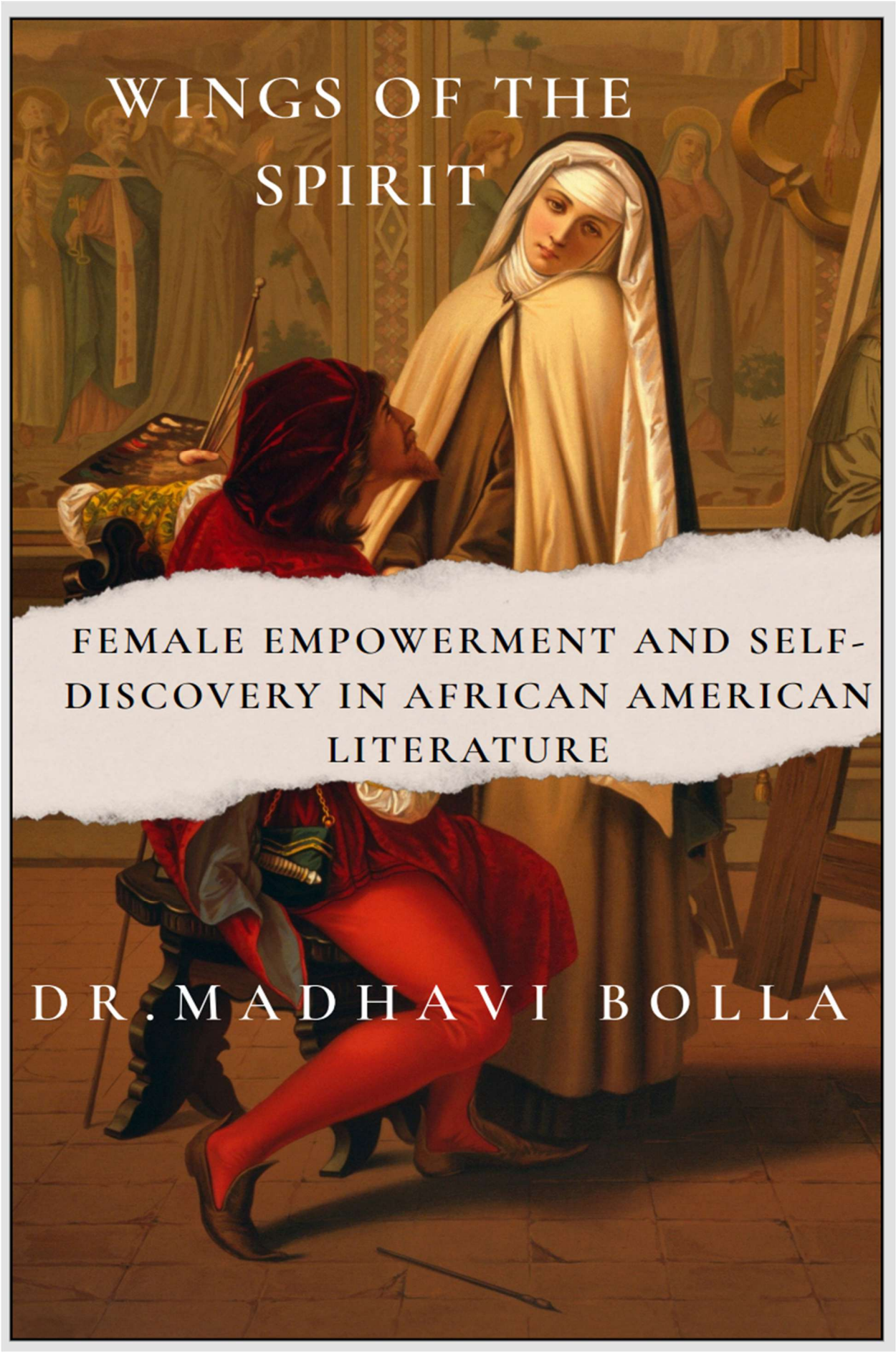

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Wings of the Spirit: Female Empowerment and Self-Discovery in African American Literature

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Preface

In the vast and diverse landscape of American literature, African American women writers have given voice to histories, struggles, dreams, and hopes often silenced or marginalized. Through their narratives, they explore the profound journeys of selfhood, community, resistance, and liberation. This book is a humble attempt to engage with three towering figures—**Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maya Angelou**—whose works not only mirror the realities of Black womanhood but also inspire continual dialogue about identity, empowerment, and solidarity. In **"Search for the Self-Identity in the Selected Writings of Toni Morrison,"** I examine Morrison's intricate portrayal of characters grappling with their fragmented selves amid historical and cultural displacements. Morrison's literature challenges the reader to understand that identity is neither static nor singular but is forged in the crucible of memory, community, and personal narrative. In **"Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*,"** I explore the transformative power of female relationships in a world marred by patriarchal oppression and racial discrimination. Walker's depiction of sisterhood reveals that mutual support and emotional solidarity can become radical acts of survival, healing, and change. In **"Bird in a Cage: Empowerment and Emancipation in Maya Angelou's Autobiographical Explorations,"** I delve into Angelou's rich autobiographical works to trace the journey from confinement to freedom. Angelou's narratives illuminate the struggles and triumphs of a soul determined to transcend societal constraints and claim her rightful place in the world. The three sections of this work are unified by a central theme: the unyielding spirit of Black women and their pursuit of self-definition, connection, and liberation. Through their voices, Morrison, Walker, and Angelou have not only chronicled their individual and collective experiences but have also expanded the very possibilities of literature itself. I hope this book serves as a tribute to their enduring legacies and offers readers fresh insights into their remarkable contributions to the global literary canon. I invite scholars, students, and general readers alike to journey through these explorations with open minds and hearts.

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2025

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Chapter-1
Introduction

The literature of African American women writers is a profound testimony to the resilience, creativity, and enduring spirit of those who have historically been marginalized. Through fiction, autobiography, and imaginative retellings of lived experiences, writers like Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Maya Angelou have crafted narratives that illuminate the struggles and triumphs of Black womanhood. Their works do not merely recount personal or communal histories; they challenge dominant narratives, reclaim silenced voices, and redefine concepts of identity, empowerment, and solidarity.

This book brings together three critical explorations of these seminal writers, each focusing on a central theme essential to understanding their literary contributions.

The first section, **"Search for the Self-Identity in the Selected Writings of Toni Morrison,"** examines how Morrison portrays the complex and often painful journey toward self-realization. Through characters shaped by the scars of history—enslavement, racial violence, and internalized oppression—Morrison reveals that identity is not a given, but something arduously constructed through memory, community bonds, and resistance. Novels such as *Beloved*, *The Bluest Eye*, and *Song of Solomon* depict identity formation as a dynamic, evolving process rooted in the reclamation of cultural heritage and personal agency.

The second section, **"Female Bonding in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*,"** highlights the transformative power of sisterhood in the face of systemic oppression. Walker's narrative portrays women who, despite being subjected to violence, racism, and social marginalization, find in each other the strength to heal, to speak, and to redefine their destinies. The bonds formed between women in *The Color Purple* serve as a radical form of resistance, offering emotional sustenance and fostering a vision of communal upliftment and personal freedom.

The third section, **"Bird in a Cage: Empowerment and Emancipation in Maya Angelou's Autobiographical Explorations,"** explores Angelou's portrayal of the struggle for freedom and self-worth. Through her autobiographical works, beginning with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Angelou maps a journey from vulnerability to empowerment. Her life stories are not only personal testimonies but also emblematic of broader African American experiences, emphasizing the importance of voice, resilience, and the relentless pursuit of dignity against the backdrop of racial and gender-based adversity.

Taken together, these studies aim to shed light on the interconnected themes of identity, empowerment, and solidarity that define the literary contributions of Morrison, Walker, and Angelou. By centering the lives and voices of Black women, their works offer both a critique of historical injustices and a vision of hope, agency, and transformation.

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Through the pages that follow, I invite readers to engage deeply with the narratives of struggle and triumph, silence and speech, captivity and liberation, and to appreciate the vital role that literature plays in the ongoing search for selfhood, community, and freedom.

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Chapter – 2

Search for the Self-Identity in the Selected Writings of Toni Morrison:

Woman oppression is the social strata that are interrelated with the personal experiences of women and projecting the women lives through the creative literature by the women writers is an essential task to understand them. Women oppression is one of the most considerable and sensitive issue to be examined and Women are less influential in our patriarchal society.

Barbara Christian in her collections critical essays Black Feminist Criticism stated that

> ***" I'd read MarcelleThiebaux'scommentary on Foucault's "Fantasia", in which she proposed replacing the male reader with a woman reader."(P.ix Christian) Barbara Christian discusses the importance of the reading and interpreting from the women perspectives to uncover the traditionally existed patriarchal power structures. MarcelleThiebaux makes the comment in the litcrit language of our day: "The only possible library for a woman is one invented by herself, writing herself or her own discourse into it".(Christian P.x)***

Women are assumed to be a very weak creature by the men and women and this study is mainly focused on the African American Women, who are subjected to the suppression and violence in experienced the same subjugation and sufferings there may be huge differences between the both. Afro American women received multi-faceted oppression. They are less privileged with inhumane experiences caused by their gender, race and class. These selected women writers not only depicted the common women sufferings but also projected their racial, abusive and slave experiences of Afro American Women in their works.

Morrison coins the term

> ***"rememory" – a word that blends "remember" and "memory" and is thus both verb and noun – to capture the persistent presence of the past, a past so vividly alive that it seems to be embodied.(Valerie Smith 64)***

Various kinds of oppressions that are experienced by the Afro American women in the novels are Physical and Emotional abuse, social deprived and identity confusion and the

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dehumanizing system of slavery so on. In this study special concern is about Afro American Women, who needs equality in all the fields.

To achieve the above objectives of related research applied a theory of feminism to analyses the selected literary texts. The primary data is selected for this study are Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eye and Beloved, Alice Walker's The Color Purple and In Search of Mother's Garden, Maya Angelou's I know why the caged bird sings and Mom & Me & Mom.Their writings were filled with the information of African American culture.

In this chapter, two novels of Toni Morrison are examined to the Afro American female journey of self-discovery and their struggle for social acceptance, inspite of numerous tragedies they endures. Morrison endeavors to determine if these women have attained a successful life by cultivating a powerful and positive self-identity that allows them to live optimistic lives in their own paths.

How they have managed to negotiate the challenges they experienced in the superior white communities. However, Afro American female writers, through their determination, created the strong female characters have been able to develop their own identities and by examining these writers can contribute the insights into how can individuals and institutions work to promote and create more equitable and inclusive society that supports the empowerment of women?

How author uses the comparison of the belief systems in their cultures to explore the struggles and troubles that Afro America people have experienced over time. By placing these two contrasting ideologies side by side, Morrison creates a framework that allows her to examine and understand the ways in which Afro American people have been oppressed and how they have persevered despite the challenges they have faced. In essence, she used the different ideological systems to shed light on the social and cultural issues that affect the marginalized community, focusing on their strength in the face of adversity

Toni Morrison is one of the world's best-known writers. Morrison, who was named Chloe Anthony Wofford, was the second child of the four siblings, born on the 18th of February 1931 in the city of Lorain, in the state of Ohio in the USA. She has also authored numerous plays and illustrated children's series as well as novels. She is the author of remarkable works such as The Bluest Eye (1970), Sula (1973), Song of Solomon (1977), Tar

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Baby (1981), Beloved (1987), Paradise (1997), Love (2003), A Mercy (2008), Home (2012), God Help the Child (2015), Source of Self Regard (2019) and Jazz (1992).

She has received numerous renowned prizes, notably several Pulitzer Prizes and was awarded the "Presidential Medal of Freedom" by the United States President Barack Obama. Morrison's writing has influenced a lifetime of writers to aspire to follow in the same path as the first Afro-American woman to receive the prestigious Nobel Prize in Literature. She faced the threat of racial harassment even though she was raised in a semi-segregated neighborhood. When Morrison was two, the people who owned her family's rented house burned it down while the family was still living inside because they couldn't make the payments. More focused on educating herself, Morrison began to enjoy and concentrate on reading..

She witnessed a new kind of race discrimination at Howard University. Moreover, she has also been witness to the way the race hierarchies have separated the different colored people of the world on the basis of the tone of their skin. For approximately 7 years, she remained on the faculty at Howard University. Within two years following her apprenticeship, she joined the company's New York City division and became an editor of both fiction and nonfiction books by Afro-American writers. Her breakthrough novel, "The Bluest Eye," was not released until Morrison turned 39, despite the fact that she was working for a publishing company. Morrison's follow-up novel, "Sula," was a National Book Award-nominated novel published the following three years.

Morrison was later inspired to pursue writing as a career by the extraordinary success of her books. She abandoned the world of the publishing industry and resumed her writing career with fiction, philosophy, and essays, as well as plays. In conjunction with the real-life story of an enslaved Afro-American woman, Morrison published the novel "Beloved" in 1987. She was the first African-American women to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1993.

Through her emphasis on the lives of Afro-Americans and her commentary on racial relationships, the work of Morrison has inspired other contemporary writers and artists.
In recognition of her work, she was awarded an honorable doctorate by the University of Oxford. The Library of Congress designated her "living legend", in the year 2000. As of 2019 June, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders, the filmmaker (director), has published a full-length

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documentary chronicling her life, Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am. From the consequences of pneumonia, Morrison passed away on August 5, 2019.

The Bluest Eye is a novel about the subjugation of an Afro- American women in the Lorain, Ohio town in America. Most of the black female characters presented in the novel are socially and physiologically suppressed as well as all are experienced racial and gender discrimination in the America.Discusses differentthemes like violence, racism, marginality, class discriminations and other issues can be found in the literary works of Toni Morrison.
Toni Morrison's first novel The Bluest Eye (1970) makes a brutal attack on the superior white standards of beauty on Afro American women and the creation of cultural distortion, shows a critique of the dominant aesthetic that is imbibed by the Afro American community.It has been a general experience that the proper demonstration of the strong points and flaws in the human relations is only possible under the unfavorable situation. Whether it is a spouse relationship or a mother-child relationship, each of these relationships displays its strengths and shortcomings in the face of adverse circumstances. Similar interaction of thoughts and emotions can be found in the multi-layered connections among the main characters in "The Bluest Eye".

Morrison examines the damaging effects, particularly upon the central character Pecola Breedlove and other female characters.This cultural perversion in a large scale stems from the legacy of Colonialism and the institution of slavery.The Bluest Eye tells the personal story of Pecola Breedlove. She is a child who has a hard time conforming to the white society's expectations of beauty. She is afflicted with "internal suppression " and "psychological enslavement ". Morrison admits that theof these standards is not only harmful to black individuals but also represents a broader cultural perversion that stems from the legacy of slavery and colonialism. Through their writings, Afro American authors persistently advocated for the marginalized members of their disadvantaged community, whose experiences and stand point would ha0ve otherwise gone unnoticed.

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The Afro - American writers have a strong level of concern for the African-American community as well as the vulnerability of women and children position. They have expressed a deep and abiding concern for the welfare of the African-American community, attributing that they may be troubled by issues such as inequality, poverty, violence, and gender discrimination.The bluest eye divided into four sections each section named after each season, that structures deep traumatic and oppressive ways of Pecola,as enters womanhood.claudia

Novel will begin from a declaration which expresses the writer's strict opinion on the contemptuous and hateful feelings that are commonly assumed and understood to be a phenomenon frequently observed and experienced by most people with colored skin. The novelist states:

"**Quiet as it's kept, there were no marigolds in the fall of 1941"** (20).

The significance of this introductory phrase can be understood by examining the behavioral reactions of individuals to the dominant socio-cultural factors. Morrison describes how she and Frieda thought they could rescue Pecola's pregnancy if they planted some of the calendula seeds. However, both Pecola and her baby are condemned to certain destruction because the soil, a very important social and cultural symbol, is not capable of sustaining and nourishing their individuals and race existed within its boundaries. And so the infant is condemned to death.

Specifically, Pecola is voiceless throughout "The Bluest Eye," a state of affairs that is essentially an echo of her throughout her whole lifetime. She does not have influence upon the happenings of her existence, nor does she have any control over what is told. Such power belongs to Claudia, a twelfth-year-old young girl, who recounts much of Pecola's experience in a compassionate and empathetic way. The "we" of the introductory phrase is Claudia and her sister Frieda. They are witnesses to Pecola's plight and to her attempts at rescue. Claudia and Frieda are portrayed by Morrison as being companions and counterparts to Pecola. They are powerful and robust; whereas "Pecola" is not so.Claudia and Frieda, try to free Pecola and the infant.

Pecola would like to be adored by all her family and schoolmates, but everyone hates her because she is black. When she understands this, she believes that if she had blue eyes,

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everything would be all right. Unable to resist the cruelty of life, she finally goes mad and escapes into an illusory world where she became a blue-eyed girl.Pecola is the victim of her father's rape and becomes pregnant with his child. The prohibited act takes place in the section of the novel entitled "spring". A significant remark is made by Claudia, the first-person narrator at the opening of the novel:

> ***"We had dropped our seeds in our own little plot of black dirt just as Pecola's father had dropped his seeds in his own plot of black dirt. Our innocence and faith were no more productive than his lust or despair". (Blue Eye - P. 20-21)***

Spring has a sexual connotation, and the seeds and earth are associated with hope and growth. As a consequence of the rape, Pecola delivers an infant who is stillborn child.

In her critical essays, Barbara Smith discussed about the sexuality of African American women in literature, Smith stated that:

> ***"A Black feminist approach to literature that embodies the realization that the politics of sex as well as the politics of race and class are crucially interlocking factors in the works of Black women writers is an absolute necessity. Until a Black feminist criticism exists we will not even know what these writers mean".(The Cambridge companion P.5)***

Black feminist perspectives on violence in the domestic sphere never support the simplistic racist and sexist controversy that Black men are particularly motivated to commit sexual violence against women.The feminist approach to more than any other expression of male supremacy, the incestual assault on Pecola discloses this when Cholly is within reach, he has recourse to the subjection and obsession of his own daughter.

This longing Pecola is expressed through one of her greatest tragedies: her desire to possess ""blue eyes." The most potent and dramatic sequence, which ultimately imprints and testifies to the crippling effects of these erroneous standards of culture above and beyond any of the other emotional or psychic pernicious influences, is seen in Pecola's identification with the following:

> ***"when the child regained consciousness, she was lying on the kitchen floor under a heavy quilt, trying to connect the pain between her legs with the face of her mother looming over her", (BE.178)***

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After her father's rape was the result.Violence's access to her body is, well, beyond his reach. From this perspective incestuous attack does not reflect black men's propensity to commit sexual violence against females, but of Cholly's inherent incapacity, impotence, passiveness and social powerlessness, which are a functional expression of the subjugation and humiliation that Cholly suffered at the hand of the white-man hunter/captive.

> ***Herman and Hirschman, father daughter incest becomes "a paradigm of female sexual victimization, … an exaggeration of patriarchal family norms, but not a departure from them."*** (Encyclopedia of Feminist Literary Theory 299)

In the novel, Pecola is the last to be suppressed, both physically and mentally. Pecola gets rapped by her father. Physically, Pecola is tormented by the sexual relations that make her pregnant with her father's child. Furthermore, the consequences are worse than the physical pain caused by being raped. It is a source of psychologically uncomfortable and caused suffering for Pecola. Feelings of culpability, shame, loss of self-esteem and degradation also destroy her. Little Pecola is one of the casualties of this kind of conflict, where a child who is uncertain and fearful wants to gain control of the situation, whether it be through aggressiveness or obedience.

In Words of Fire,Kalamuya Salaam, a black male writer points out,

> ***"As long as male domination exists, rape will exist. Only women revolting and men made conscious of their responsibility to fight sexism can collectively stop rape". (289)***

Pecola blames herself, saying that her ugliness caused the rape that eventually drives her insane. The issue of sexual abuse is a complex and delicate one, and should not be treated in a light-hearted manner.Although "The Bluest eye" explores the themes of sexual violenceand traumatization.

> ***"Did you hear about that girl?" "What? Pregnant?"***
>
> ***"Yes. But guess who?"***
>
> ***"That's just it. Ain't no little old boy. They say it's Cholly." "Cholly? Her Daddy"***

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"Uh-uh." (The Bluest Eye; 188-189).

The tragic and painful journey that Pecola has to go through after being violated by her father is the focus of Toni Morrison's novel. In terms of its devastating consequences, Morrison's revision describes it as an irretrievable damage. Through her father's deadly deed, Pecola gives birth to a still born child of her father.

She becomes plunged into a perpetual gloom after distancing from what traumatized her. She becomes trapped in a world reflecting her non-existence, and ultimately she begins to lose her true identity after being abused. Such experiences have a crippling effect on her psychological and spiritual state. They do not remain as a single entity, but instead they leave profound traces in her memories in the shape of fragments and stains. They do not remain as a single entity, Pecola's identity is also built on these memories, which form a collection of grimy shadow images in her consciousness. Pauline

She is also ostracized by society, which reacts to incestuousness. Morrison characterizes Cholly as a weak man, as racially and economically oppressed. When he was a young boy, he was humiliated by two white men who demanded that he engage in a sexual act with a young black girl. The event leaves Cholly with a sense of powerlessness and at the same time creates his sense of hatred towards black women.Toni intension is not to feel for cholly's traumatic past.

> ***Kimberly Drake argues, "we are not meant to pity him as a "victim of society nor . . . condemn [him] as inhuman monsters, but . . . locate a space of identification somewhere between these two extremes".(Tracey L. Walters P.128)***

Pecola is also robbed of her vision of love through Cholly's forbidden act. By not exposing Pecola to black aesthetics, Cholly is raping Pecola's body while Pauline is raping her mind. Both should be seen as transgressors from a feminist perspective. In this way, estrangement from her racial heritage, Pecola is susceptible to the damaging efforts of internalized colonialism.

Pecola was reminded of her ugliness; she was comforted by the myths of her culture which she had absorbed over her life. Above all, she was comforted by these words: "You are not beautiful, and you are not ugly. At every turn Pecola is confronted with attitudes and

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images based on the myth of white superiority that reinforces her inclination towards self-hatred.

In the Bluest Eye, all the black female characters like Pecola BreedLove, Pauline,Frieda are under the identity confusion. This story develops during the time of Great Depression and illuminates their struggles against violence and discrimination faced by African American women in America.Bluest Eye is a study of Afro American women, who had a deep devastating effects of domestic violence, self- hatred, racial prejudices and class divisions etc.,.

In the novel The Bluest Eye, especially black female characters are subjected to ridicule for their physical appearance based on their view point of Eurocentric beauty standards. Pecola Breedlove is a mistreated young girl for her dark skin considers as "Ugly", this negative image is created by the white people. Afro American women are considered as a very ugly people because of their physical features like their colored skin, crooked nose and short, wavy brown hair on the other hand, white people known for their white skin, flat hair and their blue eyes.

> ***"The eyes, the small eyes set closely together under narrow foreheads. The low irregular hairlines, which seemed even more irregular in contrast to the straight, heavy eyebrows which nearly met. Keen but crooked noses, with insolent nostrils. They had high checkbones, and their ears turned forward. Shapely lips which called attention not to themselves but to the rest of the face... It was as though some mysterious all knowing master had given each one a cloak of ugliness to wear,... the master had said, "You are ugly people"*** **(The Bluest Eye; 36-37).**

Carl Jung's theory of Individuation entails, everyonehas uniquestyle in their psychological structure that needs to be explore their inner self. His theory of individuation emphasizes the evaluation, progress and realization of the unique psychological structure of every individual.

Individuation involves the assimilation of unconscious material into consciousness, facilitated by the development of the ego and awareness of one's own psychic content. The collective unconscious also plays a role in individuation by providing inspiration and guidance. Jung believed that finding meaning and purpose in life is achieved through the

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integration of conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche, leading to a sense of wholeness and completeness. Individuation is a lifelong process, offering new opportunities for growth and development, but it can be a painful process requiring acceptance of difficult truths.

> ***Jung highlights "how attempts at being individualized in this way can paradoxicallythwart the unfolding of an individual's true potential. He writes: 'The individual is notjust a single, separate being, but by his (sic) existence presupposes collective relationship,it follows that the process of individuation must lead to more intense and broader collectiverelationships and not to isolation" (P.9The_journey_of_individuation_A_Jungian)***

In "The Bluest Eye", the emotional trauma of the eleven-year-old Pecola Breedlove is caused by white beauty standards. She is the object of hatred in her family and school, and in the community at large, because she is black.The central theme of the novel is about the white supremacy on the black people in the existing American society. The concept of beauty in the white community is postulated on the physical feature of an individual. Apparently standards of beauty are having blue eyes, straight hair and white skin.They see themselves within the framework of the manufactured models of beauty that are created by mainstream of American community.

> "***Historically, in the American context, young women with milky White skin, long blond hair, and slim figures were deemed to be the most beautiful and therefore the most feminine women***". (Black sexual …P. 194)

This is the story of dark-skinned young girl Pecola, believes herself as Ugly and rejected because of her African physical appearance and Ugliness leads to the experience of discrimination. Pecola always desires for blue eyes, supreme standards of beauty and strongly admits with that she gets acceptance in that community.Black feminism's examination of Pecola's self-hatred exposes the black girl's self-destructive possession of the dominant culture's standard of feminine beauty, i.e., blue eyes, blonde hair and fair skin.

> ***As Banks suggests,"the 'good hair' and 'bad hair' distinction is probably the most indelible construction of hair that occupies the psyche of African Americans."***(Black sexual…P. 195)

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This is the norm which defines the core of the aesthetic codes of western/white culture, which sees blue eyes as a sign of feminine beauty. The collective black desire to be white is represented by Pecola's passionate desire for the eyes of blue. It demonstrates the obsession of black people conceptualize and fantasies about whiteness and the perception of their identity. It is indicative of the deep and pervasive psychological and cultural effects of internalizes colonialism and racist and sexist ideologies

> ***The master had said, "You are ugly people." They had looked about themselves and saw nothing to contradict the statement; saw in fact, support for it leaning at them from every billboard, every movie, every glance. "Yes," they had said. "You are right." And they took the ugliness in their hands, threw it as a mantle over them, and went about the world with it (The Bluest Eye; 37).***

Pecola's reaction is the same as that of her mother, Pauline, when she is being physically suppressed by the Master. Besides accepting oppression, she even accepts being black and wears ugly clothesPecola is shown to internalize this negative attitude of her beauty, which is common in their community. Because she is black, she is the object of hatred in her family, at school and within the community.

Pecola's mother did not provide her with any kind of encouragement; on their contrary, hate for her only became stronger. As to why the society regards the white beautiful as admirable, and the white as beautiful and to be admired, and the black as to be ugly, it remains a persistent phenomenon in the consciousness of the black people.

Society is a kind of secondary residence which helps in the formation of an identity, but everywhere she goes, Pecola encounters hostility in people's eyes, both at home, at school and in the neighborhood. All over the world, a child is an adorable object. But even the children are viewed with loathing in a community where black is regarded as ugly.

standards of beauty, encouraging them to embrace their own culture. In The Bluest Eye, Pecola Breed love is the second child of Pauline and Cholly Breedlove Toni Morrison's main objective is to celebrate blackness and to reject the superior. She faces social, cultural, and psychological oppression, says author. All of these forms of oppression are experienced by Pecola which creates a harmful effect on her.

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The Bluest Eye discloses the desire of Pecola's longing for blue eyes, which is the symbol of self-identity. It explores the societal factors that create a significant interpretation and understanding of such concepts as cultural standards of attractiveness, ordinariness, and family values. Racism is existed widely, which damage the black identity. Pecola is subjugated by the subordinate culture of the supreme white people beauty standards which in a candy wrapper beautiful white smiling girl named a Mary Jane's description shows the racial discrimination prevails in Afro American community.

> ***"this same community's conscious and unconscious willingness to perpetuate the racist idea that white is better destroys the novel's central character Pecola Breedlove. Unlike Pecola, who wants blue eyes, Claudia, the young character from whose voice we primarily hear the narrative, seems to understand the trappings of uncritically adopting western ideas about beauty. Claudia concludes that she has limited (if any) access to whiteness and that she is deficient in this constructed racial binary, so she despises, more than anything, the "thing" that makes white better". (Cambridge companionP.72)***

She enjoys eating Mary Jane Sweets because she is captivated by the blonde, blue-eyed Mary Jane on the packet. Having white physical features appear as the symbol of superior culture on the contrary dark color is undesirable. Here the fascination of Pecola is shown as :

> ***"Each pale yellow wrapper has a picture on it, a picture of little Marry Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eye are petulant, mischievous. To Pecola they are simple pretty..."(The Bluest Eye: 50).***
>
> ***While eating the candy, she internalizes the smiling picture ofthe blue-eyed, blonde haired little girl that adorns its wrapper. She eats the candy, andA its sweetness is good. "To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane.Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane."46***

One of the School incidents of Pecola is described about her ill treatment experienced, at the time of seating arrangement in the classroom faces cultural

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discrimination by the teachers and the students. They deliberately avoided and mocked her. Even teachers trying to avoid looking at her, this incident shows the suppressed and isolated situation of Pecola.

> ***She was the only member of her class who sat alone at a double desk.The first letter of her last name forced her to sit in the front of the room always... The teachers had always treated her this way. They tried never to glance at her, and called on her only when everyone was required to respond. She also knew that when one girls at school wanted to be particularly insulting to a boy, or wanted to get an immediate response for him, she could say. "Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove! Bobby loves Pecola Breedlove!" and never fail to get peals of laughter from those in earshot, arid mock anger from the accused.(The Bluest Eye; P. 45-46).***

Thus, Pecola is unable to combat or escape from her surroundings. All she wants to do is put her arms all over her eyes and vanish, but everything fails. Pecola's vision is a reflection of all the experiences and memories she would like to eradicate. Knowing that she would never be recognized by anyone in her school or the crowd on the sidewalk, she sought to understand better how to interact socially with these "ugly" individuals. Moreover, she is equally scorned by both her schoolmates and by her teachers. Restricted within her gender and constrained by her years, she is obliged to find creative outlets to cope with the everyday struggles and muck of her existence. Unlike Sammy, she does not have the opportunity to escape or socialize by venturing out into the world in hopes of finding a new environment to explore. Trapped in the labyrinth of her self-understanding, she is stuck in the vortex of her darkness.

An antithetical thesis to the aesthetic code of the ruling class, St. Louis Blues. As part of the African American collective unconscious, the aphorism that goes, "the blacker the berry, the sweeter the sap" places the highest possible aesthetical value on the darker skin. Whereas Claudia is subjected to her mother's lyrical dismantling of the Shirley Temple aesthetic, Pecola is abandoned by Pauline, who devours her affection for the fair-haired child of her white employers, who demands her affection and allegiance more than anyone else in her family since "they gave her what she never had". Pauline is employed by a well-to-do

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white family called the Fishers, and she idolizes them, adoring their blond-haired, bluish-eyed daughter.

She continues to draw nourishment from her relationship with the fisher family but fails cholly she slaps Pecola when she inadvertently knocks over a pan of blueberry cobbler and burns her legs in the process. While Pecola is instructed to call her mother "Mrs.Breedlove", Pauline releases a lifelong fury of hatred towards her daughter, embracing the white fisher child, whom she calls "Polly" in an assumption of racial superiority. The abuse makes Pecola feel like an inferior object, like the dark berries she is a representation of Pauline's dislocation and estrangement from her Southern Afro-American lifestyle and the world beyond. This view point exacerbates the conflict and leads to the fragmentation of her extended family. The root cause of Breedloves deprivation is clearly shows the prevailing racial discrimination.

This is the world of white in contrast to the blackness of Pauline's spirit. She withdraws and constructs a separate world for herself in which

> ***"White men taking such good care of they women, and they all dressed up in big clean houses with the bathtubs right in the same room with the toilet. Them pictures gave me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard".(123)***

Pauline's abnormal behaviors can be considered in relation to her unrelenting submission to the bitter reality of being black, which she understands and links to the notion of external ugliness. She is unable to fight against this identity imposed on her by the prevailing racial stereotype. Her 'colonised self' constrains her into believing that because she is black, she is therefore ugly, and she is unable to deconstruct her 'self'.

In Toni morrison and motherhood, As Karen Carmean observes, Pauline conforms

> ***"to a role defined by others, andin confusing self with role, Pauline denies any possibility of growth. [She represents] many who, in adopting white values and standards of behaviour, deny their essential value, substituting false—even destructive—standards"(P.50)***

Here, she subordinates her identity to the deceptive standards of beauty set by Pauline. Under the pressure of such influences, she attempts to pursue an aesthetic standard that is impossible to achieve.

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Although being a mother is recognized as the most holy occupation in a woman's existence, it also indicates an attempt to limit and trap a woman's body by restricting her ability to reproduce. Controlling the sexual life of a woman is an additional form of domination by the conservative patriarchal society.

Pauline does not play the role of a mother, nor does she play that of a wife. She thinks Pecola's ugly, blames her for having raped her, and despises her. Pecola's seemingly hopeless life is dealt its ultimate blows when she is raped by her father. Worst of all, when she tells her mother about rape incident, Mrs. Breedlove not only does not doubted her, but also beats her.Pecola's mother failed to give her a positive self esteem because she did not have one of her own self respect. She has been raised to be a miserable, undesirable little girl.

> "***It had occurred to Pecola some time ago that if her eyes, those eyes that held the pictures, and knew the sights-if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. Maybe they'd say, "Why, look at pretty-eyed Pecola. We mustn't do bad things in front of those pretty eyes."Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although something as wonderful as that happen wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time (The Bluest Eye; 46).***

Pecola is perpetually dreaming about becoming Shirley Temple, illustrating that Afro-Americans have only two choices: running away or mimicking white People following their culture. Ignorance of colored people and unacceptable creatures in the superior culture results of being culturally uprooted and estranged from their marginalized Afro- American inheritance.

Mary Wollstonecraft suggests that the answer to women's problems lies in rationality and, righteously shaped by prudence, in Vindication of the Rights of woman. She therefore

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urged women to train their minds as well as their bodies. However, a bit of a stretch, she goes on to explain that it was the nurturing role of women as breadwinners that contributed to the deterioration of their rational sensibilities.As well as being physically real, repression has an insidious psychological impact. As ultimate reality, social falsehood is imposed on the subservient groups. In order to legitimize an unjust social order, they are used to give specific meanings to psyches and social practices. Morrison illustrates this through Pecola's longing for a white, middle-class identity in the Bluest Eye.

The most important structural unit is the extended family, which is distorted and moulded by the standards of the dominant white community. The definitions as well as the functioning of the beauty, normality, and familial structures are changed and comprehended by the experience of African American people as transmitted by white people, thus progressively leading to the area of psychic devastation. The fragile fabric of the family breaks down and dissolves because of egotistical notions about everything from love to fortune to appearance. This theme is also very significant in Afro-American literature, which depicts the humiliated and debased existence of the African-American community, which has been historically marginalized from the general population.

Psychological fragmentation result from Pecola's estrangement from family and the community. The novel explores the impact of race on the social dynamism of the community in which the Macteer and Breedlove families live. It is an exploration of the psychological consequences for black female of being marginalized, in real life, not only in literature.

In her article The Convergence of Feminism and Ethnicity in the Fiction of Toni Morrison, Denard argues *that :*

> ***"[black women] always maintain, whether they desire it or not, a connection to their ethnic community." They are the "cultural bearers, they function as a parent … as a sort of umbrella figure in the community not just with [their] children but with all children". (P.128 Marie Porter)***

Pecola retreats into a personal world of fantasy in her struggle to find a viable self. Forced to withdraw from life altogether, she lacks the inner struggle to confront the prejudiced attitudes of race-conscious whites and caste-conscious blacks.Morrison's Pecola is the story of a black girl who feels rejected by her family and society, and sets out in search of what she thinks are "acceptable": the blue eyes of a Caucasian girl. Pecola is a young girl

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whose every night prayer is for beautiful "blue eyes". She is defiled in her very innocence by the yearning to be physically attractive in order to be loved. Her longing can be viewed as similar to the mother's transition into the seclusion of the film world, Just like her biological mom, Pauline, she ends up as a falling victim of the racial canons of American society.

> ***Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes.***
> ***Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat***
> ***discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something***
> ***as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time. (Bluest Eye, 61)***

She is traumatised by her strong conviction that if she had blue coloured eyes then everyone would like her and she tries to get them.Pecola's sense of self is shattered as she begins to accept the false notions of self-perpetuated by the white community, doubting her own worth and questioning community, questioning her abilities and ultimately culminating in self-loathing.Feelings of being unsightly haunt them and have an impact on their self-esteem and relationship with other in the community. She devotes all her attention to creating an outwardly acceptable faced, rather than focusing on her own inner authentic experiences. Clarrisa emphasizes that the stress of being everything to everyone and nothing to herself makes Pecola feel frustrated, lonely, inferior and mentally ill. This is the result of the internalized racism fostered by the family and the community.

Pecola believes that she will only be loved and accepted by her family and community if she has blue eyes because of the constant emotional and physical abuse from family and community members who project their own frustrations and self-loathing onto her.Morrison's depiction of the devastating effects of repressing pain on the individual human psychology, the circumstances that produce such scarring, and the remedies for overcoming the trauma of the immediate past are not the result of psychological analysis applied to human beings, but the result of what she has suffered and experienced herself.

Morrison encourages up to identify not only with Pecola's victimization, but also with our role in the devastation of the Pecola's world by detailing each emotional and psychological assaults levied against her. The despondency of the characters is indicated by Morrison's alteration of the sequence of seasons as titles of her individual chapters. There are four distinct sections to the novel. Each segment is entitled by the title of a seasonal period. Morrison's use of the cycle of the seasons as the title of her chapters is an indication of the

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characters' despair. Pecola's life is an illustration of the fact that the environment in which she grows up is not conducive to life. The environment in which she grows up is not conducive to life, as Pecola's life clearly illustrates.*NaintaraGorwaney points out that,*

> ***"The primary concept of the self emerges within the womb of family relationships" (American Studies P.no 4)***
>
> *The same idea was proposed here by E.Earl Baughman:*
>
> ***"A Psychological Analysis…the child's family is usually regarded as the single most important determinant of how he comes to value himself, and within the family, the influence of the parents (or parent substitutes) is viewed as having special significance" (American Studies P.5)***

Black folks have been conditioned into believing that they're ugly, and they've conditioned their minds to the standard set by their oppressors. That standard is represented by the Breedlove family, particularly by the role of Pecola Breedlove. They are living there, because that's where they were born. They might have left there for a different and better life, but their thinking is so conditional that they believe that it is reasonable for hideous people to be living in an obnoxious place.

According to psychologists, the development of an infant's identity is initiated when a child sees herself mirrored in her mother's eyes. For a young child, the most significant form of love that can be given to her is the love of her mother.The mother's role is essential in the development of a child's self-esteem. It is through the mother that a child learns about his or her heritage, which is crucial to the process of forming a self-identity.

> ***Nancy Chodorow, sociologist and a psychoanalytic feminist "merged the psychological and feminist perspective and studied women as mothers and impact of culture on that. The daughter learns to subscribe to the role of the caregiver and reproduces 'mothering'. Whereas the boy comes to learn that women always to be the caregiver and nurturer. This impacts the formation of gender identity, girl as feminine and boy as masculine. Her theory is criticised for analysing 'motherhood' as a monolithic construct***" (P.131 Approaches to Psychologyof Gender)

The study of the mother-child bond has been explored by various critics and thinkers. Historical, social and feminist perspectives have also examined the subject of maternity.

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Through the portrayal of Pauline Breedlove and Mrs. MacTeer, the strengths and limitations of the maternal roles are shown. Although it is manifested in other ways, the worship of maternity demonstrates the existence of a major distinction among being a mother and mothering. Moreover, this separation is based on the reality that every woman, before becoming a mom, is part of the great social context that determines and defines her sphere of influence.

An isolated individual's evolution and unique potential to contribute to the community is dependent on the environment in which his or her development takes place. The similar consideration must be made when considering the place of the Afro-American in a community in terms of her contributing through the performance of maternal roles.Born and brought up in a racial community, it is not possible for these women to conform to the conventional and acceptable forms of maternal expression.

Having been subjected to the dominant social-cultural conventions of the white-dominated hegemonic society, they are unable to construct a significant sense of self-understanding. Being born and brought up in a racial environment, it is not feasible for these women to conform to the conventional and generally recognized forms of maternity.Their self -esteem is distorted and corrupted by the burden of the humiliation of the slave system and the racialization of their black color, which leads to a disruption of their ordinary relations. Due to their vulnerability and inability to self-love and esteem, they are unable to reciprocate such sentiments towards their people and their relatives.

Pauline as a child because of false and fraudulent standards for loveliness and beauty that she has created for herself and which she has impregnated with her love for the dominant society's social customs, and then there is the strength of Mrs. MacTeer's character, who understands the importance of maintaining her own position so as to foster the importance of self-esteem within her family because she believes that these are the standards that will enable her to educate her family to live and survive in the midst of the difficult society's customs.

The world of the MacTeer sisters is experienced through the eyes of their mother. Pecola arrives at their home when the father burns down their family's home and they are obliged to live in the open air. The MacTeer home is where she is introduced to an essential stage in her development, and where she is supported by the sister's and mother. In her

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fiction, these are mothers who have been trafficked, flogged, battered, strung up, and otherwise used as commodities by a brutal and oppressive majority white community. By depicting the horrifically strained relationship between the mother and the child, she validates the significance of the roles of African-American motherhood in providing a secure haven for her offspring. The writer argues that the disappearance of this rewarding and empowering aspect of the mother's task destroys personally and civilizational both the mother and the subsidiary daughter. Despite not being the most exemplary of mothers, these women demonstrate a great deal of affection and unconventional ways of expressing it.

Over the course of the novel, Claudia questions the values of society and watches the harmful impact of these values play out in her surroundings. She realizes that the value placed on foreign notions of beauty is a negation of her own self-worth.

Her encounter with Maureen Peale, the white girl, brings home to her the fact that the dominant culture’s promotion of monetary values in the only one. In contrast to the Breedloves, Claudia does not have an obsession with the materialistic. While others are in the mood for expensive Christmas presents, Claudia has her own ideas: “If an adult with the power of granting wishes had taken me serious and had listened to me what I wanted, they would know that I wanted no possessions. I was more interested in feeling something on the day of Christmas.

Claudia thinks:

> ***“Had any adult with the power to fulfill my desires takenme seriously and asked me what I wanted, they wouldhave known that I did not want to have anything to own,or to possess any object. I wanted rather to feel something on Christmas day.” (Bluest eye P.21)***

Her ultimate wish was not to get dolls or sweets, but to feel family, secure, warm and aesthetically appreciated.

Claudia's description of her mother's treatment of them at their home is that they were being treated as simple objects, like every other thing in the household. Whenever Claudia

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and her younger sister Frieda are being introduced to strangers, they are "...not introduced to them, they are just pointed out.

Her understanding is that if you do not value yourself in terms of your heritage, the result will be a loss of self-esteem. Claudia is also conscious of her restrictions as a black woman and as a woman in general. Her certainty is that there will never be any change.

A major theme in the Bluest Eye is the failure to achieve. This is demonstrated when sisters Claudia and Frieda, hoping that Pecola will survive, sow seeds of calendula. This failure is not only the loss of the flowers, but symbolically the loss of values such as truth, simplicity, honesty, faith, innocence and so on. What they would like to see in their surroundings community. Regrettably, the despair of failure replaces the optimism of planting. Failure to take root and grow the seeds that held so much promise.

The book is therefore a lament for the loss of innocence and hope. But the fact Claudia lived to tell her story suggests that marigold seeds wasn't a failure. Pecola is unable to do this because she is impractical and she lives in an unreal world with Mary Janes and blue eyes. She never gets to know herself, and there are no mothering figures to guide her. Through contemplation and reflection, self-actualization can be achieved. Pecola is unable to do this because she only sees what the white society wants her to see-"a dark and hideous being" who was mocked and judged by all around her. She is so possessed by her own lack of white color and physical attractiveness, that she cannot see her own self-worth and inner beauty,that she cannot achieve the 'selfless state' predicted by the Buddha.

Pecola experiences a lack of connection with those of her surroundings due to the continuous refusal receives from both her family and community members. Pecola is not recognized by either the dominant American culture or the suppressive Afro-American community. In an alien land, she oscillates from one society to the other, and ultimately she is doomed as an innocent girl. She is unable to locate the strong foundation of affection and nurturing that is essential for the proper growth of an individual's personality. Through Pecola' s narrative, the tale of so many American Pecola' s who have suffered from inferiority complexes, both hereditary and instilled, and who carry the baggage of a shattered psyche and a divided self, is told.

Her own mother favors her white employer's children over Pecola's and her brother's. The capacity of self-reflection is central to Kant's philosophy. He was also of the opinion that

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the relationship with other people could have a beneficial effect on an individual's self-development.

Unable to achieve the impractical and irrational objectives she has chosen for herself,Pecola perishes. She mourns in the dark world she has made for herself, without any maternal characters to direct and nurture her. Pecola doesn't develop according to Hegel's ideas, either, because she's too obsessed with blue eyes to see more than her biological needs. As a result, she becomes psychologically dead, a breeding ground for negativity, and her own spiritual development is arrested.

Pecola's sense of self is that she is an insignificant being and leading a devastated life. She is no other option, except to live. To expert zest and energy from such a person is vain. Pecola is suffering from an "insidious trauma" in which the atrocities of the repression are a threat not to the physical body, but rather to the spirit and soul. She is unable to link her suffering to her own trauma because there are so many painful memories buried in her memory.

Foucault emphasizes that the key to developing a healthy self is to known oneself and to take care of one's self. He was a firm believer that only those who take care of themselves will be able to take good care of other people. Unfortunately, Pecola forgets to live for herself and becomes so obsessed with fulfilling a goal set for her by the white society. She is being drawn into the Labyrinth that she had made for herself, and she is not able to get out of it. It is only natural that she should losing her mind by chasing a goal that is humanly unreachable and unable to deal with the psychological distress that was caused. Any girl who denies reality and lives in a world of fantasy could meet Pecola's destiny.

In conclusion, women's oppression is a complex issue that is intertwined with personal experiences and societal structures. One way to gain a better understanding of women's experiences is through creative literature written by women themselves. Pecola is voiceless throughout the novel, a state of affairs that is essentially an echo of her throughout her life. Toni Morrison addresses the issue of racial oppression and its devastating effects on individuals. Pecola is voiceless and powerless in a world that constantly dehumanizes her. The novel also emphasizes the importance of empathy and compassion, embodied by Claudia and Frieda.

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Black feminist perspectives on violence in the domestic sphere reject the oversimplified and harmful stereotype that black men are inherently more prone to commit sexual violence against women. The feminist approach to violence highlights the importance of acknowledging and addressing the systemic roots of gender-based violence and the need for transformative change. Novelist sheds light on the larger societal issues that perpetuate gender-based violence and inequality. Cholly's actions are a tragic manifestation of the subjugation and humiliation he has suffered at the hands of the white man's oppressive power structures. It also dealt with the devastating effects of physical and mental suppression on a young Black girl. Pecola's story is a tragic example of the cyclical nature of violence and trauma in a society that perpetuates inequality and oppression.

This novel confronts the difficult and complex issue of sexual abuse and its impact on the individual. Pecola's story is a tragic example of how the victim can be blamed for the actions of the abuser. The devastating effects of sexual violence on Pecola's life are explored. His sense of powerlessness and hatred towards black women are traced back to an event in his childhood where he was humiliated by two white men who demanded that he engage in a sexual act with a young black girl. Jung believed that finding meaning and purpose in life is achieved through the integration of conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche, leading to a greater sense of self-awareness and personal growth. Emotional trauma of the Pecola Breedlove is caused by white beauty standards and the white supremacy on the black people in the existing American society.

The protagonist Pecola's desire for blue eyes reveals the destructive effects of racism and societal standards of beauty on young black girls. Black feminist perspectives on the novel highlight the need for challenging and resisting these oppressive norms, as well as uplifting and celebrating the diverse beauty of black women.

The destructive effects of internalized racism and sexism on the African American community. Morrison raises important questions about identity, self-perception, and the damaging impact of cultural norms and standards on individuals and communities. Pecola's reaction to her oppressive environment is a reflection of the attitudes and behaviors she has

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observed in her mother and the community around her. The society regards the white beautiful as admirable, and the white as beautiful and to be admired, and the black as to be ugly, it remains a persistent phenomenon in the consciousness of the black people.

Society is a kind of secondary residence which helps in the formation of an identity, but everywhere she goes, Pecola encounters hostility in people's eyes, both at home, at school and in the neighborhood. Pecola is subjugated by the subordinate culture of the supreme white people beauty standards which in a candy wrapper beautiful white smiling girl named a Mary Jane's description shows the racial discrimination prevails in Afro American community. She faces cultural discrimination by the teachers and the students. Even teachers trying to avoid looking at her, this incident shows the suppressed and isolated situation. Her vision is a reflection of all the experiences and memories she would like to eradicate. She is unable to combat or escape from her surroundings and is scorned by both her schoolmates and her teachers.

Pauline's behavior is a result of her internalization of negative racial stereotypes and her inability to challenge the dominant societal beliefs about blackness and beauty. The pressure on women to fulfill the roles of mother and wife is portrayed as a form of domination and control. Pauline's failure to fulfill these roles leads to her resentment of her daughter, Pecola, and her inability to provide her with positive self-esteem. The most important structural unit is the extended family, which is distorted and moulded by the standards of the dominant white community. The definitions as well as the functioning of the beauty, normality, and familial structures are changed and comprehended by the experience of African American people as transmitted by white people, thus progressively leading to the area of psychic devastation.

This theme is also very significant in Afro-American literature, which depicts the humiliated and debased existence of the African-American community, which has been historically marginalized from the general population. Psychological fragmentation result

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from Pecola's estrangement from family and the community. presents a powerful portrayal of the devastating effects of racism, prejudice, and trauma on individuals, particularly young black girls like Pecola.

Through Pecola's story, Morrison encourages readers to confront their own complicity in perpetuating systems of oppression and to seek ways to heal the wounds inflicted by trauma and discrimination. the damaging effects of internalized racism and the importance of the mother's role in the development of a child's self-esteem are explored. Therefore, the mother's role in teaching a child about her heritage and instilling a positive sense of self is crucial. Pecola doesn't develop according to Hegel's ideas, either, because she's too obsessed with blue eyes to see more than her biological needs. Pecola is suffering from an "insidious trauma" in which the atrocities of the repression are a threat not to the physical body, but rather to the spirit and soul. She is unable to link her suffering to her own trauma because there are so many painful memories buried in her memory.

Beloved: The Impact of Slavery on Motherhood

The first mistreatment of black women was slavery. Throughout the history, black women have been oppressed, abused, vulnerable and suppressed due to their race and gender. Unlike the white women who have been protected by their men and by their cultural norms to make it easier for them to reach adulthood in comfort, Afro American women have never had the support and protected by their male counterparts. Afro American women's struggle and loss of control over their lives was a result of these horrible and terrible conditions.

Violence directed against African American women had a major impact on American community, which was highly unfair and inadequate in its treatment of an Agro American society in the first place, and Afro American women in particularly. The purpose, we would argue, is to mitigate the impact of the recent past and its implications for Afro American self-identity. Morrison's utilization of the tragic allows her to draw a conclusion to the past events that she has introduced into the narrative through her use of images and the imagination.

Morrison's novels are a powerful reminder to her readers of the devastating consequences of slavery. Slavery was the beginning of the chain of evil. Black people used to

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be enslaved, and then that was followed by racism. Racism led to being discriminated against and denied rights.

The character's tragedy not only leads to an intensively very public and agonizing downfall, it also paralyzes the character so that everyone can witness the most intensely personal and most deeply felt grief. This is something of an essential point in Beloved. From this time forward, Sethe's final tragic moment, we're left with little more than a private rumination on the nature of humanity, as the historical Images, symbolisms and the mishaps are all being manipulated to give the tiniest possible appearance of the awareness that has been robbed from us by the sufferings of enslavement. In Morrison's novels, memories have the role of reminders to the characters about their troubled histories. The memory has been sidelined and essentially distanced from the characters themselves, treated as an object that is part of the characters' subjective lives.Incarnating the pain and sorrow from the distant past, she surfaces the buried recollections so that those forgotten can reclaim their rightful place. In a similar manner, Beloved rises out of the Ohio River just as memories rise out of the depths of the unconscious. Beloved is the moving embodiment of the unacknowledged pain of the Afro-American nation. She is in fact in the process of being denied because she is the personification of that denial.Sethe refers to these recovered remembrances as "memories". When triggered, the previously repressed experiences can be paralysing to the individuals involved, and frequently assume a new life for themselves.Remembrance is the deliberate, sometimes very hurtful, re-establishment of memory in the consciousness of the novel's protagonists. It can also be seen as a character in the novel, a theme in the novel, because memory is seen by the characters as having own will.

In this particular case, Sethe reminds us of the way in which their mother, having been impregnated and raped during the journey from Africa by the white sailors, discards her offspring, most probably as soon as they are born. The names of these abandoned infants are nowhere to be found.Sethe recalls being the only child born to her with a mother's name. Sethe is given a name and a subjective life of her very own because she was the result of a voluntary and affectionate carnal encounter.

Beloved longs to hear the hard and hurting histories that make up Sethe's pasts.Sethe wishes to tell her own past can be understood as Beloved's wish to know more deeply about herself, her own past-as Sethe's loving daughter, and her own past-as the shared experiences

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of enslavement.Since the Beloved wishes people to testify about the horrors of this past, their existence in the life of the Sethe's, Denver's, Baby Suggs and the people around them can be considered as a kind of corporeal engagement with history and the prevailing narrative which has objectively re-defined enslavement and the experiences of the slaves in relationship to the prevailing narrative.

To put it quite bluntly, the enslaved and the ex-slave are not genuine human beings, genuine subordinates of the broader Culture; they only exist in an objectively related way to the broader Culture.The Beloved rails itself against that very idea, and its very presence is a means by which those who live in the moment are literally confronted by the past, who have no consciousness about the cruelties of both their personal and their shared historical past.Because in most of Morrison's fiction the protagonists are unable or unwilling to reflect on and talk through their previous oppression at the hand of their white oppressors, Beloved is born.

The beloved is, at a certain degree, the personification of these repressed recollections. It might also be said that part and parcel of her being is the expression of the anger which such memory has at being repressed and made into objects.The creation, the actual realisation of the recollections is the appearance of the Beloved from the Beyond.Characters are frequently personifications of the attitudes in the novels of Morrison. The use of impersonation is used as an illustration of the reciprocal nature of the relationships which exist within an object and its subject. Objects take on the traits of people in the novels of Morrison.

It is the same fragmental version, a production of the former, but unconcerned with the past, that is carried to the front and inserted into the awareness of the other person.

In that way, the manipulation of tragedy is not the context of the circumstances, but the circumstances of the character. The point being made here is that reworking the incidents would imply an obligation on Morrison's part to intellectualize those incidents, which is hardly what they have earned. Afro-American composition is an attempted reckoning with a past that is unworthy of and inappropriate for Afro-Americans, as a study of Toni Morrison's novel Beloved reveals. In a tantalizing way, a connection is maintained between the advantageous sense of pride and the dignity that derives from a relation with the people who have passed on and the awareness that is possible in the characteristic of the present-day of

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the dramatically past. This is how we come to recognize a human being fully equipped to relate to a collective of those of the distant past.

During the era of sexual abuse of Afro American women, both white and black men menaced women's bodies. They were victims of rape at the hands of their masters as well as those of the black family masters. In every society, in times of war, protest, any movements and under the guise of growth & development, women and children are the victims. Women have always been subject to subjugation, social discrimination and mental torture for generations.

"Beloved" (1987) is the fifth novel by Toni Morrison. It is the tale of a mother who is in bondage. They are also racial, gender, and classist. It is situated in the period after the Civil War. It spans some 4 decades, from when Sethe, the novel's leading character, is born in 1835 to when it ends in 1875. The major part of the narrative, nevertheless, occurs in the year 1873, with the arrival of Paul D comes to 124, "Bluestone" and whose existence triggers a lot of the flash-backs.

The author states in the "Preface" to the novel title that the book is inspired by a magazine cutting. " A magazine article in "The Black Book" chronicled the tale of Margaret Garner, an emancipated young mom who had been imprisoned for murdering one child (and attempting to kill the rest) instead of returning them to their owner's slavery farm.

It can be stated clearly that it is about the real issues of the African American slavery. The investigation of the enslavement which began at the beginning of the 17th period up to its final sacrifice indicates that the slaves, especially the black women, were exploited, humiliated, insulted and killed; Black women have been utilized, deprived, abused, suppressed, and ruthlessly raped Therefore, the current book, "Beloved," is the most authoritative account of the historical record of the slave system in America. This is a novel that makes use of her customary technique of stream-of-consciousness, in which she enters the minds of her protagonists and shows the freedom with which they associate their thoughts. She also makes sure that the reader experiences the history of the passage from multiple viewpoints by using the shifting-point method instead of choosing one character.

She is also using the method of magical realistic writing, in which the imaginary happenings are represented as though they were really real, and this is especially evident in this particular novel.

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Mr. Garner, who owns Sweet Home, then goes and buys a new young one named "Sethe" to substitute for Baby Suggs. Other enslaved people include Paul D., Paul A., Paul F., and Sixo. All of them are very young and they would like to be married to Sethe, but she decides to marry Halle, who has bought his mother's freedom. The brutal schoolteacher is the new master of Sweet Home after the kind-hearted Mr. Garner passes away and Mrs. Garner succumbs to cancer. It is no longer feasible for all of the enslaved people to commune with this new master. So all of the enslaved people come up with a plan to run away from Sweet Home. Several of them succeed, including Sixo, who is captured and burned at the stake.

Pregnant with her "fourth child," Sethe had not yet made up her mind to escape, when the schoolteacher's wicked nephew beat her badly and sucked all the breast milk out of her turgid bosom. In the end, even Sethe has decided to flee from the Sweet Home. While running, Sethe gives birth to Denver and manages to reach to Baby Suggs at the 124, Bluestone. Sethe is then imprisoned for having murdered her beloved offspring. She is eventually returned, along with Denver, after six months. Their house is haunted by the apparition of their slain daughter Beloved. Afraid of the ghost, her two boys, Buglar and Howard, flee the premises and later Baby Suggs dies. In response, Paul D. chases the spirit of the Beloved out of Sethe's house. The Spirit of Beloved returns to Sethe's home in the guise of a little girl. She then seizes control of the household. Eventually, the congregation's women banish the spirit of the Beloved. In a nutshell, this novel is about the struggle of Sethe and the devastating effects of enslavement on the life of Afro-American people and particularly on the life of motherhood of African-American Women.

The Sethe Suggs, Baby Suggs and Madam are the strong and lovable mothers, in that no matter what difficulties they face as enslaved black women, their battles are an inspiration to those mothers facing similar predicaments.African – American women's worst consequence of socialization was sexual assault. The rape of the black has been highly beneficial to the whites - it has satisfied their sexual appetites and has made the black woman seem extremely voluptuous and erotic. She produced mulattos, who were subsequently the exclusive domain of the white masters. Rape has not only shaken the psyche on the black queer, it has shattered the mindset of the whole society of the Blacks.

> ***As an example, Baby Suggs, the Vashti in Morrison's Beloved. While in conversation with her new daughter-in-law, Baby Suggs admits that she was***

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constantly being abused and violated because of her, "eight children had six fathers"[B: 28].

There is another story of a woman by the name of Vashti, who had been a slave for one year and was the victim of her master's rape. Black women were also physically broken by lynching, whipping and branding. When the slave attempted to escape, if she made a small blunder or mistake, and was unwilling to maintain extra-marital sexual relationships at the hands of her master, she was certain to be whipped, lashed, or lynched. Slave stories and the fiction that deals with the misery of the African American enslaved often vividly depict the punishments that were meted out to the slaves, both men and women, which included being burned alive or being whipped to within an inch of their lives.

In "Beloved," a slaves called "Sixo" attempts to escape, but is captured along for the journey. Síxo struggles against the slave collector, but eventually he is burned alive. There are reports that Sethe's birth mother was also murdered because she was also an escapee from the slave master's large mansion.

One needs look no further than Sethe's own example to appreciate the cruelty of enslavement. As Sethe explains to Paul D:

….those boys (the nephews of the school-teacher) came in there and took my (Sethe's) milk. That's what they came in there for. Held me down and took it. I told Mrs. Garner (Her mistress) on em. She had that lump and couldn't speak about her eyes rolled out tears. Them boys found out I told on em. Schoolteacher made one open my back, and when it closed it made a tree [B: 19-20].

As mentioned above, the white masters made no difference among men and women, boys and girls. They were merciless in their enforcement of hard labor on the slaves.

As mentioned above, the white masters made no difference among men and women, boys and girls. They were merciless in their enforcement of hard labor on the slaves.

There is no doubt that the black woman was severely used by the white planters, degraded, beaten, raped, but the black man's sexist traditions also tortured and mistreated the black woman both mentally and physically. Thus, the sexism and racism of both black and white men are equal contributors to the plight of African American women. Throughout the history of enslavement, the Black women were vulnerable to being enslaved, sold, forced to

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work hard, and brutally assaulted, battered, raped, and assassinated. In her magnificent work of fiction, "Beloved," Toni Morrison describes Baby Suggs, Sethe, Suggs, and Vashti, Sethe's mother, as being easily sellable, beaten, violated, and murdered. Blackness was not the exclusive issue for the 'black girls and women', which Toni Morrison reveals in this novel. Black impoverishment, disempowerment and lack of dignity were also pressing concerns. These are the main obstacles that stand in the way of the Black Society developing, and even more importantly, for the Black female. Through this book, the author focused on the confrontation between the identities of the blacks and the traditional values of the whites in the American community.

But in America, being a black woman is very much different from being just a woman. Often simply being a black woman is the reason for being victimised. While Sethe is a casualty of a vicious form of slavery. Sethe, Beloved's protagonist, is psychologically devastated by society's cruelty. Sethe's life represents the era of dehumanizing slavery that followed the devastating Atlantic slave trade. Beloved is a poignant portrait of the poor victimized by outright enslavement.

> ***"Gina Wisker takes the impact of Beloved beyond slavery, saying, "Beloved is an intensely social and psychologically political book. It engages the reader with the everyday lived horrors of slavery and the race memory of the slave crossing, each equally felt as real, and it also engages the individual, black or white, with the complex consuming pain, and guilt, of the everyday lived memory of slavery".(Toni Morrison A Literary Life P.60,61)***

Black women's problems stem from widespread racism and slavery before the American Civil War. At the time of the transatlantic slave trade, the treatment of both black men and black women was brutal.

Women were the ones in the most pain and helplessness. Black men, being in a pitiful position themselves, could not offer any form of support to these victims. Slaves and their families were victims of exploitation at the hands of their masters. After a few more decades, the after-effects of the slavery were discrimination, racism, class prejudice and a shattered family with amorphous individuals who still endangered the very existence of a healthy black life.

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This chapter carefully examines Morrison's revolutionary utilization of the discrete and extraneous constitution of the human sensibility in the shape of the Beloved.

> ***For Holland, "Beloved is a work that represents "the most profound and complex flirtation with the boundaries of language and with African American female authority," in which "people re-create a collective history from the living death of a brutal language and bodily violence" and in which an act of infanticide could be considered as "coming into [what Spillers called] 'Mother Right'".*** *(Black Feminist Literary Criticism P.72)*

Beloved is the tale of the Black people who were trying to build up their new lives after they had run away from their slavery. The story begins in 124, in the house owned by Sethe, an ex-slave who escaped from Sweet Home, where she was enslaved, 18 years ago. They are accompanied by their youngest daughter, Denver. They had two sons, Howard and Buglar, who were both runaways from the house when they were 13 years old. They were also the home of Sethe's mother-in-law, Baby Suggs, until her death eight years ago. Sethe's husband, Halle, was believed to be dead. And it's believed that their home is being haunted by the ghost of Sethe's One-year-old baby, Beloved. The novel is promoted by Sethe Suggs. She is the mother of four children, one of whom is Beloved. She has an attempt on her children's lives and the death of her only daughter, "Beloved".

In "Beloved", Sethe's traumatization comes from having to struggle against the sexual abuse, the brutality, the violence, and every other form of psychological and physical enslavement you could ever dream of, and she's haunted by the ghost of her murdered daughter. In addition, she is the victim of the haunting of the spirit of her daughter, who was her murderer.

Beloved was murdered by his Sethe 18 years previously. Despite the unbearable circumstances of her life, the fact that she prefers a life of isolation in a spook house to a life among the whites is evident when she states, "It's simpler than other situations. Sethe's portrayal from the beginning is of a woman with an iron will .She is a woman with eyes of iron and a mind of iron. Having been enslaved made her resistant to any kind of violence that might come her way.

She struggles to outrun her very own past-though she possesses a strong will. But the past keeps sneaking up on her all the time.

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Black families now found themselves being discriminated against. Born out of the historical context of American slavery and Reconstruction, both Beloved and The Bluest Eye are based on real-life experiences. Beloved is based on the true story of Margaret Garner. The novel depicts a slave's reaction to the Fugitive Slave Act. Runaway slaves were people who had managed to escape from their slave owners in the South and found refuge in the North and the frontier regions. The fictional representation of Margaret Garner is Sethe, a fugitive slave who is the main female character in Beloved.

Margaret Garner was a runaway slave of the antebellum period. She was a mixed-race woman. She was the daughter of Priscilla, a woman who was one of the Gaines family's domestic slaves. Their home was a farm in Boone County, Kentucky, by the name of Maplewood. She escaped from her owner in Kentucky in January 1856 with her man and four of her children. They made it to Cincinnati, but were captured by slaveholders soon after. Margaret Garner killed her infant daughter with a butcher's knife as slave owners advanced to capture the runaway slaves. Garner made a hasty escape and tried to kill her other children. She was caught, however, Unfortunately she was unable to finish what she started.

> ***"Thomas Satterwhite Noble, in his painting The Modern Medea(1867), gives us a black women standing over the bleeding bodies of two children while another pulls down her left arm as if trying to stop her from an action, and a fourth kneels pleading at her feet. Her face is angry, her mouth open, as she confronts four white men, one pointing down in horror at the bodies on the ground. Satterwhite paints both Garner and her children dark brown, through historical sources describe her as mulatto and suggest that one of the white owners of her plantation fathered at least one, may be two of her children."(Valerie Babb P.229)***

Garner's actions were motivated by her unwillingness to return her children to a life of enslavement. In the book Beloved, Sethe, a black American woman of exceptional strength, is the main character of the novel. She is willing to make any sacrifice not only to achieve her own liberation, but also to ensure that her children do not fall under the bondage of enslavement. In order to free herself from the chains of slavery, Sethe kills her own daughter. Certainly slavery is experienced as an inferno and has destroyed the capacity and the willingness of the slaves to endure in a horrendous situation.

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In the book Beloved (BD), Sethe is a runaway slave on the run. Although she has been freed from the bonds of slavery, she has not been able to lead a productive life because of the damage that slavery has caused to her spirit already. Sethe is also a victim of physical and psychological abuse.

When Sethe is expecting a child, She was raped by the nephews of the school teacher. The School Teacher is Mrs Garner's brother. Mrs Garner is forced to give away all of her slaves in order to pay off the debt she owes him. Until the end, the Garners could not control their slaves, even though they treated them much rather than the other slave owners. In contrast to the Garner family, the schoolteacher is the opposite. He is in charge of the plantation and his treatment of the slaves is very different from Mr Garner's.

For the slaves, it becomes a very agonizing state of affairs They feel that they are dehumanized by him, and so Sethe and Halle make plans to run away from the plantation in order to be set free. Before they leave, Halle and Sethe have made a secret plan to meet each other in the barn. Before they leave, Halle and Sethe have made a secret plan to meet each other in the barn. Unfortunately, the schoolteacher's nephews track Sethe down, capture her and then sexually assault her. Sensing their inhuman treatment by him, both Sethe and Halle hatch a scheme to escape from in an attempt to gain their freedom. However, before they flee, both of them plan to have a back-door rendezvous at the Barn. But the teachers nephew, named Trak Sethe, captures her and starts molesting on her:

> ***"--they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby. Nan had to nurse white babies and me too because Ma'am was in the rice. The little white babies got it first and I got what was left. Or none. There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you". (Beloved. 384)***

This is the sort of psychic trauma that black people were subjected to throughout the slavery era. In addition, for the young African American girls, this violence has been sexual and has put their very lives in emotional jeopardy. As Sethe describes her experience to Mrs. Garner, Mrs. Garner pities her despite the fact that there was no protection she could have given her. Knowing her crime, the schoolmaster grabs Sethe and strikes her across the bare back with such a force that she loses all feeling in her skin. Even though Sethe has survived

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all of this torture and has retained her sanity, she has been so psychologically damaged that even after her eventual release, she is still in bondage.

Because her insubordination is being expressed on the premises of the schoolteacher's expertise and power, and her response as such is the action of a slave and not of a human being, her entire experiences, her narrative, remain eternally bound up in the implications of the master's power.

> ***"When Stamp Paid shows Paul D a newspaper article describing Sethe's trial, Paul D's compassion temporarily fails him, and he reminds Sethe that she has two legs, not four. His distinction between animal and human behavior echoes an earlier moment in the text when Sethe overhears Schoolteacher and his two nephews comparing her ''human characteristics'' with her ''animal'' ones. Sethe rejects Paul D's oversimplification of her act, just as the text rejects his implicit assignation of blame to Sethe alone. If the infanticide is indeed the act of an animal rather than the ultimate sacrifice of a mother, the slave system is culpable: Sethe's psychological response to Schoolteacher's approach is specifically linked to her mistreatment at Sweet Home, an abuse Sethe understands as particularly threatening to motherhood".(P.56 writing..)***

This is the kind of trauma that Afro American People were subjected to during the slavery era. Furthermore, for the young black girls, the traumatization was of a sexual nature and it threatened their lives in an emotional way.

When Sethe tells Mrs Garner what has occurs to her, she has compassion for her, despite the fact that there is nothing she can do to defend her. When the schoolteacher finds out what she has done, he takes Sethe away and whips her so hard on the back that her skin is burned and she loses all feeling in her body. Through all this torture, Sethe survives and retains her sanity, but is so psychologically damaged that even after her release, she will have to live in bondage. She is traumatized because she feels double, American and Afro-American. The cause of her trauma is her desire to be loyal to both of these cultures.

This is the same flogging that Sethe has been talking about with Paul D. Paul "D" comes into Sethe's life, making her think about her past as a slave and all the shared

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experiences they go through. By degrading and ignoring what are considered to be natural and human values, their slave situations are viewed as violations of the Individual.

The scars of the past have not been forgotten by Sethe. She is plagued by the suffering she has endured in the past. When she remembers the abuse, her sorrow is multiplied and prevents her from moving on with her life.

As for Sethe, the past is a bondage that binds her to her very personal enslavement in her free existence. Once the shroud of enslavement is parted, Sethe tries to discover what is still left of her original identity. The tree on her backside represents the psychological, emotional and also physical pain that Sethe is going through. The tree on Sethe's back is also a symbol of the burden that Sethe must carry on her back. Sethe has been unable to erase the atrocities of her slave past and the suffering continues to spread and trouble her.

She is aware of the atrocities of the institution and the physical scars on her back are a physical representation of the place where the violence and trauma took place. Sethe is therefore a victim of a dominant cultural and sociological system that prevents her from caring for herself or for others.

Similar to Pecola, Sethe is also denied the opportunity for a safe and secure childhood and a happy home. In slavery, a separation occurs between a mother and her child. The results are disastrous for both.

Sethe's biological mother is no longer able to nurture Sethe in the slavery atmosphere, leaving her with miserable fragments of memory that she's carried with her, all her life. Sethe has been a witness to her mother's suffering in the clutches of the slave system. She is not in a position to be with her mother for most of the time. For Sethe has not been able to see her own mother's real face, for her smile has been twisted by the dentures in her mouth. Sethe grew up on a plantation. She never really got to meet her mother: "I didn't really ever see her except a couple of times out in that field, and one time when she went to work on the Indigo.

> ***"My woman? You mean my mother? If she did, I don't remember. I didn't see her but a few times out in the fields and once when she was working indigo. By the time I woke up in the morning, she was in line. If the moon was bright they worked by its light. Sunday she slept like a stick. She must of nursed me two or three weeks--that's the way the others did. Then she went***

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> ***back in rice and I sucked from another woman whose job it was."***(Beloved P.118)

Sethe could only identify her own mother by the slavery sign: " Back then she had undone her gown and the breast and raised her and indicated underneath. So when Sethe tries to get a brand of all her own so her mother can recognize her, she is beaten by her own mother, who doesn't realize the reason until she has a brand of her very own made by a school teacher. The mark which the enslaver has made is the one that Sethe's mother has as an affirmation of her relationship with the daughter. But even this paternal connection is shattered, and Sethe is unable to identify her biological mother by the sign after she has been hung. As a young child, Sethe is deprived of her natural born right to drink her mother's milk. And that dispossession drives her determination to provide her infants with their rightful milk. Sethe, in her discussion with Paul D., is more concerned with Denver's being starved of her milk than with the self violence she has committed. Because Sethe would be expecting, they were concerned that their beating of Sethe would hurt the child; they made a big hole in her belly so that the baby would not be harmed. Most of the slaves, and Sethe and Baby Suggs are no different, were taken from their homes at a young age.

Where Baby Suggs was resolved not to over loving with her children, it is Sethe who is obsessive with her children. In Women, Race and Class, Elkins stated that

> ***"… The typical slave family was matriarchal in form, for the mother's role was far more important than the father's. In so far as the family did have significance, it involved responsibilities which traditionally belonged to women, such as cleaning house, preparing food, making clothes, and raising children". (P.15)***

Sethe witnesses the death of her own mother at a young age. Her master hanged her mother when Sethe was very young, so she never really experienced much love from her mother. It is for this reason that the love she feels for her children is so strong. Sethe eventually comes to understand that her mother's powerlessness is limited by slavery; the feelings of abandonment and neglect that she has felt still haunt her when she later becomes a mother of her own.

They realize that they were not able to raise their children when they were babies, and that they had to watch their loved ones taken away from them. Hence she decides that it is

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better to die than to live through the slavery. Eventually, in an act of motherly love and protection, she attempts to murder her children, unwilling to subject them to the torment she endured as a slave in Sweet Home.

Sethe speaks to Mrs. Garner about wanting to marry Halle and tells her. When she proposes to Mrs. Garner, thinking that she has as much right to a wedding as any other woman, she says, "She and Mrs. Garner were the only ones there, so she resolved to ask her." Mrs. Garner only chuckles because for the enslaved, their weddings are not recognized by law and they are not entitled to the same ceremonies as the whites. School Teacher is depicted as a prototypical White slaveholder who tries to control his enslaved by any means necessary. Instilling a sense of being inferior in the minds of the slaves is a means of subordinating the black mind. Whereas The Bluest Eye pits blacks against whites, Beloved pits animals against humans.

The teacher is holding a tape measure. He's measuring the angle of the slaves' faces, the shape of their heads, and the size of their brains. He records each and every one of the details to demonstrate the superiority of the white race and the subordination of the animal-like blacks to the inferior race. Sethe is initially uncomprehending about the school teacher's practice of gauging her height with a piece of thread. The comparison of the livestock to the slaves has now become so commonplace that the schoolmaster counsels the traders who go in pursuit of the runaway enslaved to capture them still alive, or else they will end up murdering what they have been rewarded for returning to them alive. Their justification for the practice of the slave institution is that it is a method of the civilization of Negroes, who in their eyes are no better than beasts. As the situation gets progressively more intolerable, it is Sethe's decision to run away from the farm and, after much suffering, she finally manages to do so. She arrived at Baby Suggs, her maternal grandmother's cottage, where she lived for the next twenty eight days in a time of peace and tranquility.

To welcome her new daughter-in-law and grandkids, Baby Suggs hosts a celebration for the whole congregation. Sethe now has the weight of her daughter's blood added to the haunting memory of the distant past. Due to the painful and disturbing memories of the killed baby, everything that is supposed to be pleasing to her sight, that which appears beautiful and the pleasures of the natural world, seem to her horrible. Sethe's world is revolving completely round her traumatic history, and it's only when Paul D arrives that things start changing.

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Through Paul D's endeavors, Sethe is able to forgo ahead and leave the past firmly behind. This is until she encounters a strange young woman with the distinctive characteristics of a baby, and who claims her Beloved.

Sethe is convinced that the young girl, "Beloved", is her only daughter. She killed her with a fretsaw when she was only two years old. She believes she is released from the trauma when she thinks her infant has been brought back to her. Sethe starts spending recklessly, spoiling Beloved through guilt, and even sacrificing her needs for sustenance, as Beloved continues to grow and grow and grow.

> ***"Sethe the teething child, for other than those times when Beloved needed her, Sethe confined herself to a corner chair. The bigger Beloved got, the smaller Sethe became". (Beloved 473)***

Sethe appears to be living a perfectly ordinary life at 124. However, the underlying violence in her is exposed by the conclusion of the book, when she attempts to murder Mr.Bodwin, confusing him with the schoolteacher. Later, when a comparable scenario unfolds, Sethe's anger is aimed at the perpetrator, but not at the victim.

Sethe embarks on a healing path together with Paul D., who shares the same tragic fate of her at the Sweet Home, and who is tormented by the painful reminders of her terrible experiences and the conscience of her guilt over Beloved. Baby Suggs is one of those born to a terrible, terrifying past. Having spent sixty years in slavery, Baby Suggs has an intimate understanding of the white masters and the wretched plight of the black servants.

Baby Suggs is enslaved, arbitrarily traded, impregnated and forced to give up all her children with the exception of Halle. The mother-child relationship is frequently severed by the slave master. He essentially used the slave women as a breeding ground to acquire more precious manpower. The women and their progeny belong to him and he can always sell them where and when he desires. Baby Suggs learns very quickly that she should not get too clingy with her babies, because they will be stolen from her eventually.

> ***"I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken, four chased, and all, I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil." Baby Suggs rubbed her eyebrows. "My first-born. All I can remember of her is how she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and***

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that's all I remember." (Beloved P.7)

Baby Suggs' way of referring to her children reveals a determination not to overly affectionate towards them, a determination born of a deep-seated loss trauma. Sethe's love for her children is unwavering, and they are her own possessions that no one can take away from her. Unlike Seethe, Baby Suggs has no memory of the majority of her offspring, and is cautious about being too fond of them to have them stolen from her again:

Of the eight children born to six husbands, the first two girls are trafficked, in the words of Baby Suggs, 'neither of them with any teeth when they grew up', and her third child, a boy, is traded for timber and 'this child they couldn't love and the rest they didn't want'. God will take what He wants to take, Shuggs shared.

The Clearing, which will make Baby Suggs and the entire society completely, is where the mending takes place. However, Baby Suggs is left heartbroken by the arrival of the Four horsemen , by the failure of her congregation to notify her of their presence, and by her inability to judge or disapprove of her daughter-in-law's rude behaviour. She doesn't know what's right any more and she couldn't do the calling any more. She feels that the journey of loving has failed. Baby Suggs is dying of a heart-breaking illness, but the flame of affection she ignites in the community's hearts saves Sethe, and proves that love can never be denied.

In Beloved, instead of returning her daughter to a lifetime of servitude, the mother, Sethe, decides to slash her daughter's slender throat. The theme of the relationship between a mother and her daughter is one of the most frequent recurring motifs in Morrison's novels. The emotional impact of the separation of mother and daughter as a consequence of enslavement is again explored in the novel.

The most ferocious natural urge that exists in the maternal instinct of a mother of any kind is to defend her offspring.

> "***The mother, asserts Sigmund Freud, is "unique, without parallel, established unalterably for a whole lifetime as the first and strongest love object and as the prototype of all later love- relations"***.(Mother love…P.148)

Sadly, under the slavery regime, Afro American mothers are deprived of the liberation or the right to defend their offspring, and specially their young daughters, and have no way of

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protecting them from the cruelty of slave institution and from the disapproving eyes of their slave owners. Morrison is not a psychologist, but what she tells us no psychotherapist could dispute her argument. Morrison's depiction of the disastrous impact of repressed pain on the individual psychology, the circumstances that create such scarring, and the healing processes involved in overcoming the terrible past are not the result of psychological analysis applied to the individuals, but the result of what she herself has experienced and observed.

After realising the misunderstandings and disapproval that Sethe would experience as a result of her actions, she reaffirms the strong, unreciprocated love that she has always had for her children by freeing them from the potential suffering that she had endured as a slave.
Sethe's Mother and Nan come enslaved from Africa to live with Sethe. Sethe's mother is also a victim of sexual abuse, but this is on a ship at the time of the middle passage. Both of them were raped by the staff on the ship, just for their personal amusement, and by the traders, who think that they will be able to profit again from the children that they would give birth to. But Sethe's mother has thrown them all away... The ones that came from the crew she dumped on the island. The other ones from other white people, she threw them away too. She threw them away without any name. She rescues Sethe, whose father is a black man, and after whom Sethe is named. When Sethe's mother is engaged with her work, it's Nan who takes care of Sethe. Nan takes care of Sethe after the death of her mother.

At one point, Sethe's mother leads her behind the smoking room and shows her a burned spot on her ribcage. Her mother's explanation is that it is a sign that to identify her mother. It is the custom for slaves to be branded as a means of identification and to catch them in the act of an escape attempt. Then, Sethe says that her mother had been hung along with many of her peers. However, she has no identification of the body, even though she is on the lookout for her mother's brand.

Denver enquires why Sethe's mother was hanged, and Sethe's response is that she has no idea. Perhaps her mother might have tried to run away from her, but not with Sethe around. Sethe is convinced that her mother would have never let her alone. She asserts that her mother is just as much of a devoted mother as Sethe herself is.
Now that she has killed her beloved, Sethe wants to die and lie down in the tomb with her dead daughter. But there can be no surrender in her mind's eye. For the sake of her three children who are still alive, she has to keep going. Her deed of committing the murder of her

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daughter and Beloved, and her being possessed by the memory of the dead and the spirit of Beloved.

> ***"The name Beloved comes from the word that Sethe had engraved on her dead daughter's sparkling pink tombstone and that name comes from the only two words Sethe hears the preacher say when the baby is buried: "Dearly Beloved." Sethe pays for the engraving of the name Beloved on the tombstone by letting the engraver have sex with her for 10 minutes, with his son watching them. It is as if the name is given to the spirit of Sethe's child coincidentally". (P. 36 Critical Companion to Toni Morrison)***

The Beloved is the wellspring of Sethe's yearnings as she is created as an actual person. These longings are embodied in Denver's intense involvement with Beloved, but this relationship is also the catalytic agent that makes the sense of self a re-examination of desire. She explains to the spirit of her beloved how much she has grown to love all of her own children. She also admits that when she buried her daughter, Sethe wanted to be laid to rest with her own deceased daughter, but that it was only due to the rest of her children that she stayed living.

Sethe begins this novel with a strong desire to see her daughter's ghost. She says to Denver that if her daughter's ghost does come, she will have an explanation for the circumstances of her daughter's death. When the spirit of the beloved really does come in the guise of a little girl, and when she becomes persuaded that the young girl is the beloved, then Sethe talks to her about the story of that time, about their mother Ma'am, about her coming to the Sweet Home and her people, about their sons and about how she had cared for them when they were born. She is of the fact that she was in love with all of her daughters. She recounts to the Spirit of the Beloved how she helped save the Little One from getting bitten by the Flies.

> ***"Flies beat me to you. I would have known***
> ***right away who you was when the sun blotted out***
> ***your face the way it did when I took you to the***
> ***grape arbor".(Beloved 388)***

During their discussion, she explains to the spirit of the Beloved how much she adored all of Her Children. She also admits that at her funeral, Sethe wanted to be burried

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alongside with her late child, but that she was only kept alive because of the rest of her children. It is an indication that she is a fine parent; she is certainly in tune with the beneficial aspects of the feminine prototype. one fear always haunted to her, that her babies will be sent into institution of slavery, and so they are sent to their mother-in-law's home, but one stays in her matrix. Even though she is sending them off, her maternal instinct is overflowing in the shape of milk through her dress.

When her milk is stolen by her nephews, her anger and frustration increase because it is her baby's milk; she is being denied her right to motherhood. Denied motherhood, she rebelled and decided to escape from "Sweet Home" rather than let anyone help her. We have an idea of the difficulties a gestation period mother has on the road to liberty. She is lucky to meet a local white woman called Amy Denver, who assists Sethe in giving birth to the child along the way. And it is with this child that she is making the rounds of her very own home at Bluestone 124.

On arriving, sethe is extremely happy and believes that she will be able to properly love her children. For twenty-eight days, however, her joy is only temporary. She tries to murder her children when the schoolteacher, show up with his men. It is the killing of the child that makes her so controversial to read and to criticise. Her terrible crime of child-murder is defended by Sethe herself. She also describes the way in which she breastfed her babies while she worked at the Sweet Home. Rather than have them lead enslaved lives like her, she decides to kill her children. She wants to inscribe her daughter's name on the tombstone as a loving mother. The sculptor requires her corpse for 10 min to carve out the 7 characters of "Beloved" on the gravestone, and she has to pay for the sculptor's services.

> ***“Ten minutes for seven letters. With another ten could she have gotten "Dearly" too? Beloved 5)***

Sethe begins caring for Denver, her only surviving offspring. But she becomes very happy when she realises that the ghost of her beloved is coming to her house. Even as a ghost, she wants to shower her with love. But when the ghost of the house comes into her house in the flesh, she felt happy. But she becomes happy again when the spirit of her beloved daughter enters into her house in physical form. She spends as much time as she can talk to her. They tell their entire stories of their slave lives, expecting her daughter to be understand her situations. However, Sethe's desire to nurture her deceased infant appears to

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be unusual and alien; her motherly feelings, which she believes to be her guilt for having murdered. One point to notice, though, is that Sethe's love for her other actual biological daughter, Denver, has diminished since the arrival of Beloved's ghost. The beloved represents the suffering and oppression of the American enslaved at both sides of the slave trade. The image of Beloved is the reminder of a collar of iron or of a violated enslaved person.The suffering and degradation that Sethe suffers at the hand of the schoolmaster's kin, whether they are his son or his nephew, is beloved. Beloved is a powerful and unmistakable sense of having transgressed.

So sethe is a wonderful mom. Despite her limitations of being an enslaved mother, she attempts to provide for all of her offspring. Sending her three kids off to Baby Suggs, courageously giving birth to Denver on the road, attempting to kill her own infants to prevent them from living in servitude in the future, the crucial couple of days in prison, having ten minutes of sexual intercourse with the gravedigger who carved Beloved's name into the tombstone, and her unbounded love for the fallen infant would automatically place her among the ranks of those mothers whose behavior is consistent with the more favorable aspects of the mother figure prototype.

> ***"Sexuality is also pervasive in the novel as a symbol of the connection and disconnection, often Beloved violent disconnection, between human beings. For example Sethe has sex in exchange for having the words engraved on her child's gravestone. In order to signify, in a permanent way, the existence of her child, Sethe feels she has no choice but to engage in a humiliating and exploitative sexual encounter. Significantly, this exploitative sexual experience happens during the day". (Critical Companion to Toni Morrison 34)***

Sethe's desire to nurse her deceased infant appears to be unusual and abnormal, but her emotions as a grieving mother who felt guilt for the crime of killing the child are normal. Therefore, she asserts that she should be considered a "good mother". She could not be described as an affectionate parent since her action of murdering the child places her within the category of those parents who operate with the more adverse expressions of the maternal archetype, according to C.G. Jung's articulation of the matrix of the maternal personality.

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Baby Suggs, too, continues to experience much to lose. She has lost all of her children, with the exception of Halle herself. She does not really remember her children because they were taken from her when they were very young.

Baby Suggs, Holy, and the self-proclaimed female minister, is telling the Black congregation and preaches to that they should love themselves. Baby Suggs, as community minister, brings their people together and encourages to love each other - since the white congregation, she claims, will no longer love it. But her community wonders why BabySuggs is always the center of attention, in this lavish celebration of blackness.

Sethe is able to claim and celebrate her own identity as a free person, as a human being rather than an inhuman slave, in this church, the Clearing. It therefore does not define its existence by what it does. She is not a white dominant member of the dominant class, but she is a funked -up African-American woman. But people of their own race often marginalize those characters who celebrate their African-American funkiness. They are not playing by the rules and are submitting to white standards for decency. They do not have a desire to be white. Shunned and marked as others by their own race, these characters flourish while living in resistance to white culture. In the very same novel, Baby Suggs is also an example of a strange woman. When the saintly Baby Suggs multiplies her feasts to feed the community in a way that recalls the biblical Jesus, the community shares in the abundance she provides, then shuns her and marks her as a pariah.

While it is debatable as to whether or not Baby Suggs really has the power to multiply a harvest, it is undeniable that she is culturally enhancing to the community by promising them to celebrate their special identity. Baby Suggs encourages other members of her own community to learn to build their own personality by loving themselves. But her community wonders why Baby Suggs is "always the center of attention" in this lavish celebration of blackness.

The community is furious that a woman of their community has been able to flourish in their midst, embrace their own nativity, color and funkiness, and undermine whiteness. because of this, Baby Suggs and others within the house of 124 are being ostracized and undervalued by the community.The residents of 124 are being penalized for the construction of their own Afro -American homogeneity and at the same time for the denial of the cultural epitaphs imposed on them by mainstream white society.

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In other words, the community dislikes Baby Suggs and her family because they are individuals, not cultural lemmings.Afro-American people are under pressure not only from the predominant culture, but also from people within their own Afro-American communities. The majority of the events in this novel that occur within the boundaries of 124 take place either in the kitchen or in the storage room. Almost all of the activities in 124 took place in the kitchen/dining area. Everything from preparing food, dining, and napping to creating art. There is a beautiful overlapping of different spatial functions in Beloved, rather than a precise division of space and activities. The characters interact and communicate with each other because they all perform many different activities in the same shared spaces. There is no estrangement between the characters. However, since none of the African-American characters want to be identified uncivilized or worse, inhuman, this rhetorical self-loathing is understandable to the reader. A slave freed after liberation, like Baby Suggs, as Morrison's work Beloved seems to suggest, does not have a cultural center; he or she does not have enough time or space to find who he or she is.

At the same time that the architectural iconography movement was emerging, characters like Baby Suggs and other freed slaves were struggling to discover their personal identities. Because it is still a foreign culture and she is still a slave, Baby Suggs is no better off in the conditions of the Garner home. Beloved speaks not only about the brutality that blacks have faced, but about how blacks in a congregation or as a community can heal and overcome trauma. It can be described as a novel designed to help in healing trauma.

In conclusion, African-American women have suffered from oppression, abuse, vulnerability, and suppression throughout history, beginning with slavery. The violence directed against African American women has had a major impact on American society. Memories play a crucial role in the novels as reminders of troubled histories, and Beloved represents the unacknowledged pain of the African American nation.The story of Vashti and the depiction of Sixo's fate in "Beloved" are powerful examples of the atrocities suffered by Afro-American women and men during the period of slavery in America. The story of Sethe's own escape and the murder of her birth mother serve as a poignant reminder that the legacy of slavery and its consequences continue to reverberate.

The history of slavery in America was marked by brutal treatment of Afro- American men, women, and children by white masters. However, sexism and racism from both Black

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and white men also contributed to the oppression and mistreatment of Afro American women."Beloved" explores the impact of racism and slavery on the human psyche. The brutality that they endured during the transatlantic slave trade, and the after-effects of slavery, all contributed to the shattered lives of Afro-American families.

The life of Black people who were trying to rebuild their lives after escaping from slavery. As it is based on the true story of Margaret Garner, a mixed-race woman who escaped with her family from slavery and killed her infant daughter when they were captured by slave owners.The trauma and abuse that Sethe experiences at the hands of her slave owners and their relatives leave deep scars that she carries with her long after she has been freed. As Sethe describes her experience to Mrs. Garner, Mrs. Garner pities her despite the fact that there was no protection she could have given her. Knowing her crime, the schoolmaster grabs Sethe and strikes her across the bare back with such a force that she loses all feeling in her skin.

The devastating effects of slavery on the lives of black Americans. The separation of mother and child, which was common during slavery, has disastrous effects on both.Sethe could only identify her own mother by the slavery sign: " Back then she had undone her gown and the breast and raised her and indicated underneath. Sethe, in her discussion with Paul D., is more concerned with Denver's being starved of her milk than with the self violence she has committed. Because Sethe would be expecting, they were concerned that their beating of Sethe would hurt the child; it delves deep into the trauma and haunting memories of slavery and its impact on the lives of African-Americans. The novel depicts the dehumanization of black people by the white slaveholders who consider them to be inferior to animals.Later, when a comparable scenario unfolds, Sethe's anger is aimed at the perpetrator.Sethe embarks on a healing path together with Paul D,who shares the same tragic fate of her at the Sweet Home and who is tormented by the painful reminders of her terrible experiences and the conscience of her guilt over Beloved.

Baby Suggs is having terrified past and spent sixty years in slavery, Baby Suggs has an intimate understanding of the white masters and the wretched plight of the black servants.Baby Suggs is enslaved, arbitrarily traded, impregnated and forced to give up all her

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children with the exception of Halle. Theemotional impact of slavery on the mother-daughter relationship. Overall, the novel presents a poignant and powerful portrayal of motherhood in the context of slavery.

The theme of motherhood in the context of slavery, and how the oppression and trauma of slavery affects the relationships between mothers and their children. The characters of Sethe, Baby Suggs, and Sethe's mother are all victims of the cruelty of slavery, and their stories highlight the complex and devastating effects of this institution on black families.The arrival of the Spirit of the Beloved serves as a catalyst for Sethe's re-examination of desire and self-discovery. Sethe's journey serves as a poignant reminder of the sacrifices and struggles that mothers have had to endure throughout history.

Sethe, who faces the challenges of motherhood under the oppressive system of slavery. Morrison's character remains an enduring symbol of maternal strength and resilience.Baby Suggs, the community minister, brings their people together and encourages them to love each other, but her community wonders why she is always the center of attention. Overall, Beloved is a powerful portrayal of African-American history, identity, and community, and its themes continue to resonate with readers today.

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Chapter-3

Female Bonding in Alice Walker's 'The Color Purple'"

Alice Walker, an African- American writer, was born on the 9th of February 1944 in Eatonton, Georgia. She was the very youngest of the eight children of Willie Lee and Minnie Tallulah Grant Walker. She was part of a poverty-stricken family, and her father was a small share-cropper with a salary of barely $300 annually, in exchange for his hard work as a share-cropper and a cattle farmer. As a result, he was unable to provide for his children's basic needs, and his wife, in addition to her work in the fields, also worked as a maid to supplement their income.

Walker saw herself as a beautiful girl who was loved by everyone when she was a little girl. But when she was shot in the right eye with a pellet gun by one of her brothers; her dreams becoming a gorgeous girl were destroyed. Her brother had instructed her not to reveal the information that she had been hit, and it was not until a week later that her parents had taken her to see a doctor. As a visit to the doctor was very delayed, it left a white mark on her eye, and although the white patch was successfully taken away when she was fourteen years of age, she had lost her sight for ever.

As a philosopher, a daughter of tenacious sharecroppers, an activist in the Southern Revolution, and a writer, Alice Walker was acutely aware of the truth of her very humanity.

the truth of humanity and inviolable right to freely express the reality and truth. But it was as a young girl, at the time of her eye injury, that Walker learned her most painful lessons about the essence of truth. Forced by her brothers to lie about what actually occurred to her eye, Alice found herself in a terrible dilemma. The lie that confused her and her parents' reaction to the problem also left her isolated and alienated.

Her feeling of self-deception increased the guilt she felt about not being honest and diminished her confidence.

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This terrible experience had a profound effect on her life, and she came to see herself as a lonely person who had been victimized by patriarchal attitudes. Walker's self-belief was shattered when she lost an eye and was scarred by an unintentional gunshot from one of her siblings. Later, a key role in rebuilding Walker's confidence was gained by her daughter Rebecca.

It was her deep inner sense of ugliness and torture that drove her to write poetry to fill her isolation, and her written works made her a leading figure. It is for this reason that Walker says that suffering is necessary in order to achieve success in life.

Following her high school graduation, Walker attended Spelman College in Atlanta on a full scholarship in 1961. It was while she was studying there that she became involved in the civil rights movement. In 1963 she was awarded a further scholarship and was then transferred to Sarah Lawrence College in New York, from where she was awarded a bachelor's Degree in 1965. It was when she was a junior at Sarah Lawrence College that she went on a trip to Africa.

It was during this time that she first fell in LOVE and by the time she re-appeared at the college, she was expecting a child. This situation made her feel very insecure because she had no funds, she was on her own and she did not have anyone who would have helped her to terminate the pregnancy. She was so frustrated and in such a state of crisis that she contemplated attempting suicide and had even been sleeping with a razor for a number of days.

On the one-hand side, she was considering the feelings of her family who would be deeply affected when they were informed about her death. On the other hand, she was of the opinion that they would be delighted with the realization that her pregnancy was the reason for her death. In the end, after enduring a lot of hardship, she was able to terminate her pregnancy with the assistance of a fellow student. This was an experience that led her to believe that she was a prisoner in her very own body, and that the body was the cause of her feelings of loneliness and despair. When she finished her course, she relocated to New York City, where she was employed by the city's Department of Social Services. She was married on 17 March 1967 to Melvyn Roseman Leventhal. He was a Jewish civil rights lawyer. When they moved

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to Jackson, Mississippi, as they were the first interracial couple to be legally married, they were subjected to a lot of violence from both black and white people. Leventhal also continued to be involved in the campaign for civil rights, while being threatened with physical violence.

As well as being a member of the civil rights movement, Walker worked at Jackson State College (1968-1969) and Tougaloo College (1970-1971). She also worked as a black history consultant for the Mississippi Head Start programme.

Despite the fact that Walker's marriage to Leventhal brought her some success as a writer, the constraints of racist prejudices have prevented many people from acknowledging her writing genius. Black male reviewers insist on focusing on her mixed-race wedding than on her writings. The marriage came to an end in 1977 when the couple filed for divorce by mutual consent. They were blessed with one child, Rebecca Grant, who was born on the 17th of November 1969.

Walker's writing portrays women who suffer from the patriarchal system which prevents many of them being able to be free and authentic selves, and thus live satisfying and fulfilling lives. The standards of behavior and life imposed on women through tradition, custom and religion severely restrict their liberty and prevent them from expressing who they really are.

Celie is young, poor, colored black, a woman, illiterate and seemingly unattractive, has experienced years of violence at the hands of her father and later husband, Albert. She develops a strong bond with her sister Nettie, who is sent away by her father when she is young. - all the labels used in contemporary Western societies to describe someone who is not considered as privileged. It does not have any recourse to power structures or institutions; it has no means of resisting violence - physical or psychological - inflicted on it. She has become victimized in the worst possible way. As an illiterate African woman, she cannot leave her community's heart of domestic drudgery. She does not lack the means to flee, nor does she have the conscious desire to do so. Celie only moves from the house of her step-father to the home of Albert, which is not a great distance in geographical terms and leads to a very similar place in terms of circumstances. These are two of the areas in which she is required to undertake the household chores and to look after other people. In both of

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these homes, she experiences the abuse of men - her stepfather and her husband - physically, emotionally and sexually.

> ***"Kaplan suggests that it is because Celie 'learns to fight back, speak for herself, defend other women' that the novel has been identified as a feminist classic". (P.119, RACHEL LISTER)***

Celie's story is told in "The Color Purple": but her tale is also the story of Shug, Sofia, Mary Agnes, Nettie - and to a smaller point, Albert and Harpe. The method she uses to achieve that is through the use of search features - disconnection, introduction, homecoming, conflict with the figures of one's parentage - throughout the piece.

Each individual "moment" of transformation and development in "The Color Purple" takes place inside and in relation to a human connection. So the search within "The Color Purple" is the search within a society. It takes place inside a commune and with regard to a particular locality. Feeling connected is incredibly powerfully empowering. To affirm the values of relatedness is another way of saying that "The Colour Purple".

The main protagonist of The Colour Purple, a woman named Celie, is changed by her relations with the women in her life. Her two main characters, Shug and Nettie, act as doppelgangers for her, each developing in their individual manner, but collectively representing a diverse, uniquely womanlike potentiality.

Although Celie's evolution has phases, they may be much more adequately seen as 'nodes of growth' or 'moments' when her awareness changes~ and a certain type of enlightenment happens. Often those transformations come as a consequence of a specific interaction or a certain moment that occurs by sharing with some other person, and the foundations for those times are continually being laid by her everyday dealings with people such as Shug, Sofia and Mary-Agnes. A detailed analysis of what are in my opinion the most minimal examples of this.

Nettie's departure from the family home will be physical. In going to the African continent to serve as a frontier missionary, she undertakes the journey of the body, which Celie is unable to do due to her status in the congregation. Nettie's voyage in "The Color Purple" somewhat

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tries (though not completely succeeds) in shattering the ideal picture of black people's Lost Heaven in Africa, to which they would be welcome to return. Nettie's community is somewhat of a foreign, romantic institution, unlike Celie's. The absence of precise geospatial, socio-cultural and historiographical contexts in the representations of Nettie's Afro society is troublesome.

Walker is cautious not to suggest that the status of the women of either society is the same, but she implies that in each instance they are inferior - and also that the connection among women, though varied, occurs in both societies. The various modes of awareness displayed by Celie and Nettie are mutually supportive and complementary. They may be in line with the way the two sides of the mind do different things.

Celie, an artist first and foremost, tends to be a "right brain" thinker, where images and metaphors hold great influence over her thoughts.

For example, when she is making a pair of trousers for Jack, she has a clear idea of what the trousers should look like in order to fit him perfectly. Rational, reflective and discursive, Nettie is more "left-brained". Her thinking is rather conceptual and more logical. In the meeting between the two of them at last, it may be that Walker is implying that both styles are equally significant and that they cannot be separated from one another.

> ***"I'm pore, I'm black, I may be ugly and can't cook, a voice say to everything listening. But I'm here" (CP,99).***

This is the key statement and this is the central assertion in The Color Purple.

As such, "The Color Purple" is a quest for selfhood as conceived by this specific writer, a member of the Afro American woman's race. Even more convincingly, however, it is a reassertion of self-identity against the erasure and the subjugation of women that Afro American women have experienced from the beginning of American slavery.

Afro American women's existence, experience and culture and the brutally complex systems of oppression which shape these are in the 'real world' of white and male consciousness beneath consideration, invisible, unknown. Certainly in her ability to write and in the way she expresses her rage, Celie is able to find her own unique voice. That is a key notion of the

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power, that Celie achieves throughout her growth - the rest include the liberation of all her sexual and violent rage, her change of spirit, and her gain of financial self-sufficiency.

Celie realizes that she is able to speak with her voice and make herself heard - unlike in her first few letters to god, where she may have only managed to do so thinking that no one would ever see them. In time she becomes able to communicate with a genuine person - Nettie - and to communicate her needs and emotions in a direct and powerful way. The issue of speech manifests itself in two different ways. Firstly, in substance, in the figure of Celie and in the other figures and events.

Shug does indeed have a strong voice and understands its powerful effect, both in her vocal delivery and the straightforward, unapologetic way in which she speaks. A unique singing voice is found by Mary-Agnes (Squeak). The second way in which it is expressed is in the formal structure itself of the narrative - the use of characters as a storytelling technique.

That makes all the difference. The key is that the focus is on the consciousness of an uneducated, poor African-American woman. This is the type of individual that has been one of the most neglected and voiceless people historically in this country. In this way, the text is an affirmation of the significance and value of this kind of individual. Despite the fact that Celie has several psychological revelations, there is no evidence of any increased maturity--in the sense that at the end of the novel she appears not much older than when she began, despite the fact that 30 years have gone by. At the beginning of the novel, Celie is under orders not to talk to anyone of an event that may have been profoundly wounding and deeply disturbing.

> ***Pa's shadow is hanging above her since the very beginning of the book. He brutalises her, then (in his mind) silences her and The early assertions in The Colour Purple are expressions of oppression and horror: "You better not never tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy" (CP, 5).***

The entire structure of the novel is built around the evolution of Celie's capacity to communicate. The initial missives are brief, concise, and fraught with repressed anguish. The later letters are longer, more eloquent, full of feeling, describing and babbling. The issue of voice is highlighted by the difference between Nettie's letters and Celie's.

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Celie's voice has never been straightened out, fixed and normalized in the way that Nettie's has been by her upbringing and her surroundings. And it is precisely in and with words through which Celie creates and builds her own identity, which she constructs, new meanings for herself and her life. Walker uses writing as a seemingly translucent means of expressing her protagonist. Letters make us believe we are participants in Celie's awareness. Although this does not achieve the sort of closeness between the narrator and the reader that a device like the inner voice can achieve, it does create a strong feeling of familiarity.

This is reinforced because Celie writes most of the notes addressed to "God" - we're nearly hearing someone praying. Celie begins her letters in despair, with no one else to talk to.

She does not have any friends, and her only sympathetic family member would be her sister Nettie. Her own mother was the unwitting victim of insanity, incapable of surviving in a community where the murder of Negroes, including that of her very husband, was not infrequent. But despite Celie maintaining an availability and empathy with the people in her environment (for example, Nettie and her mother), it is through withdrawal that she manages to escape the abuse to that she is exposed**.**

"It all I can do not cry. I make myself wood" *(CP,19)*

And those earlier missives show a great repression of emotion in relation to the things which had befallen her.

Once Celie expresses how she feels about being repeatedly raped by her father, all she can say about the harrowing experience is: "But I'll probably not be able to get over it". Simultaneously, she is very aware of her mother's feelings:

> ***"But I don't never get used to it. And now I feel sick every time. I be the one to cook. My mama she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now. But too sick to last long" (CP, 5).***

Celie's terse, epigram-shaped descriptions of her life are enormously emotional, both concentrated and suppressed**:**

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> ***Don't nobody come and see us. She got sicker and sicker. Finally she ast Where it is? I say God took it. He took it. He took it while I was sleeping. Kilt it out there in the woods. Kill this one too, if he can. (CP,6)***

Only later, after so many years, is Celie able to talk about the traumatic experience of being raped, about the pain of losing her children and of

losing her virginity, and about the rage she feels towards her father and Albert.

For the moment, all she does is resign herself to her treatment and make sudden declarations that hint at the vast acres of dormant suffering inside her**:**

> ***"A girl at church say you get big if you bleed every month. I don't bleed no more" (CP,7).***

Simultaneously, she attempts to shield her young sibling, Nettie, from the sort of abuse she is receiving, and she urges her to "stick to her reading," as her pregnancies have not allowed Celie the opportunity to do. (The necessity of literacy is a common refrain in Walker's writing).

Color Purple represents a concrete engagement with the political economy of racial and queer issues in the US - an act of defiance of the suppressive regime of an androgynous, radicalized community. This connection is the way in which women relate to each other.

Elements of such bonds include mutual dependency, mutual integrity, mutual assistance, division of labour, mutual recognition and respect. This is evident in many ways in "The Color Purple" - most obviously through the relation established there between Celie and Shug, but also through the relations established between Celie and Sofia, between Sofia and Mary Agnes, and more generally in the different everyday relationships established between the two women. Celie only finds the courage to stand up and break out of the cycle of violence with the support of other powerful women, such as her friend and lover Shug Avery. The relations among the females are more crucial for their feelings in the novel than their associations with their male counterparts.

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In such relationship there is true closeness, closeness that comes from exchanging emotions and sharing common interests, from quilting and supporting each other in caring for children and in work. African-american scholarship on Quilt making has flourished since the 1980s. African American quilts have been understood as both functional, aesthetic, and indeed textual. Theoretical approaches to aesthetics, the histories, and cultural trajectories of African American quilting are largely contested and the focus of scholarly discussion.

> ***"it is difficult to strictly define an African American quilting tradition. some scholars have posited that enslaved African Americans used quilts as texts, encoding in their various patterns messages, histories, and even maps of potential escape routes that they did not want their masters to be able to read or to understand. (Carmen,P.266)***

This novel is about women nurturing themselves. There is no expectation of nurturing from men and there is no expectation of being nurtured by men.

In "The Color Purple", Celie is only allowed to start a new phase with her own life once she has freed it from the bonds of being tied to Albert, her husband. Even Celie maintains her own spiritual practice from the hardest times in this lifetime until the moment she reaches maturity and becomes a whole person, thus being happy, satisfied and at peace. As they become more aware and mature their view of God changes: a pantheistic god replaces the white patriarchal god. But Celie's letters to God are where the novel begins and ends. Celie is held up as an example to be emulated by Afro American women, and Walker does not allow Celie's spirituality to die. In the feminine dominated space of Walker's novels, the concept of God being a man is challenged. As Celie states**:**

> ***"Anyhow, I say, the God I been praying and writing to is a man. An (CP, 217)***

It is in fact with these sentiments of pantheism that she starts her final epistle:

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> ***"Dear God. Dear stars, Dear trees, Dear sky, Dear peoples. Dear Everything. Dear God. Thank you for bringing my sister Nittie and our children home." (CP,128)***

The fact that the realization of God and the self-knowledge belong to each other is communicated by the following lines uttered by Shug to Celie:

> " ***Shug say- the thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. (CP, 95).***

Shug's teaching to her has been that there is no such thing as male or female in God:

> ***"God ain't a he or a she, but a It. But what do it look like? I ast. Don't look like nothing,she say. It ain't a picture show. It ain't something you can look at a part from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is ever thing, say shug. Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found it. "(CP,95)***

For Walker, it is the abuse of God and of religion in the subjugation of women that is more important than the very presence of the divine.

As, an African-American woman has experienced the anguish and degradation of being doubly segregated. The twin scourges of sexism and racism are too pertinent and inhuman to allow her, a forthright critic of injustices against women, to remain silent. Sexual and racial discrimination is a problem for women unable to recognize themselves and to resist the forces working against them. She confronts sexist attitudes in the community, discovers the value of women's solidarity in growing up, gains economic independence and achieved fulfillment in creating. She is able to establish a non-judgmental relationship with men, to affirm her heritage and spirituality, and to recognize the importance of a gender transition.

As she tells the stories of her men and women, Walker is concerned with the exposure of social institutions that serve patriarchal interests and the need for Afro American women to combat both sexism and racism. Here, examines these factors and the emerging triumph of the autonomous and independent woman. Preferring the functional to the decorative aspect

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of art, Walker presents it as healing and transformational, serving to sustain life. Walker emphasizes art's service to the community as a unifier and keeper of the soul of the people, stressing the importance of heritage and models in art. In short, Walker's fiction is a huge homage to art. An Afro-American woman has to endure the indignity and the suffering of being a double outcast, with the brutal abuse at the hands of her colored husbands and her wretched condition in the white dominating society that neglects or even looks at her contemptuously.

In America, Walker is dealing with the race, the sexuality, the values and the spiritual issues that arise from the series of the events. The novel is a convenient field for her to explore and resolve these issues. Writer and theorist Alice Walker refuses to identify herself as a 'feminist', labeling herself instead a 'womanist'. This is because her aim is to work for the survival and well-being of her community, which includes both male and female members. She seeks to value and honor women and the different kinds of work they do, in order to promote dialogue and community.

Walker uses the term "womanism" to express the female bond she has in mind. In addition to her considerable enrichment of the terminology of feminism, in particular, the author's coining of the concept of "Womanism" to describe her own ideology of feminism has been the subject of much debate in both the literature and the feminist community.

> "***Walker uses the term ''womanism'' rather than ''black feminism'' as a way of valuing black roots and an inclusive politics; that is, womanism is about improving conditions for women and men while addressing the concerns of women of color, lesbians, and others who are often excluded from feminism. Walker also champions the recovery of a black female creative heritage, suggesting that not only literature but also more everyday artistic expressions be included in such a tradition***". (Beaulieu, P.97)

Bell Hooks points out how successful this famous Walker's The Color Purple was:

> ***'Unlike most novels by any writer it is read across class, race, gender and cultural boundaries. It is truly a popular work – a book of the people – a***

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> ***work that has many different meanings for many different readers.' (P.103, Lauret)***

The abundant admiration was given to this part of the novel, which portrays a victorious image of femaleness that made many people want to applaud it.

It shows a victorious image of femininity, and this has been applauded by many for the wealth of tributes that have been devoted to that part of the story.

Traumatic events fragment the individual's psyche, preventing them from articulating their thoughts. This may happen because of the fractured texture of the traumatic narratives. Throughout her novel, we can observe Walker's use of the device of dissection as a way of illustrating her protagonist's experience of these conditions. Celie's broken speech or language is an illustration of her state of emotional turmoil. We can see this by looking at what she writes, that reveals the trauma and chaos of being a target of both corporal and verbal abuse. Charles Proudfit argues that Celie's style of writing her letter is a mirror of her traumatization. He writes:

> ***"The style of this letter, and of those that immediately follow, is characterized by short, choppy sentences, halting rhythms, repetitive grammatical structures of subject, verb, object, concrete physical descriptions in an ongoing present and matter-of-fact tone. It is a style that mirrors Celie's traumatized cognitive processes and depressed emotional state. We learn that Celie's depression is partly caused by her repressed rage". (P.7, Proudfit).***

Celie's mental disorder is revealed through the structure of the storytelling. Walker chooses to use letters rather than chapters, which is itself broken up. The narrative of Celie's own life is told in a series of abbreviated letters, which make it easy for the reader to leap from one thought to the next. The temporal disruption is particularly indicative of Celie's repression as a consequence of all the violence she has experienced. In this way, the letters are a manifestation of the trauma. Celie has difficulty articulating her inner struggles, and finds solace only in a conversation with God. The Color Purple inherits the literary form of the eighteenth century epistolary novel. The epistolary format permits Celie, a southern black

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woman, to express herself. In the process of composing letters, Celie finds a way of framing her own identity and exploring herself. Alice Walker reveals the narration of the book throughout a number of letters that are neither inscribed nor numbered. This is a technique designed to ensure the authenticity of the narrative.

The characters' letters, that are composed by Celie and her sister Nettie, demonstrates a profound political awareness and casts light on the social, political as well as the contemporary cultural scenario. Because of the few specific characters and the letter form of the scripts, the novel requires an intensified study. Signs, clues and hints in the epistles shed light on the society of the time- period. The time period in the book is approximately about forty years. There are large intervals between epistles, often as much as about five years. Alice Walker's use of the popular folklore language which expresses her empathy and concern to a language that she strives to redeem from the shackles of racism.

> ***"The book's main concerns are not disguised: Walker's primary subjects are female sexuality (including homosexuality), Conflicts between the sexes, racial oppression, the dangers of anthropomorphizing God as a powerful white man, and the role of Africa in African American identity formation".*** **(Routledge. P.140)**

The declaration indicates that the book is upfront about its major issues, which are to explore female sexuality and also homosexuality, to investigate the conflicts between men and women, to depict the consequences of racial oppression, to question the notion of God as a powerful white man, and to consider the role of Africa in the creation of the African-American identity. Through the story of Celie, Walker addresses the intricacies and complexities of female sexuality, the ways in which the female sex is subjugated and exploited by males, and the effects of institutional racism on the experiences of African Americans.

Walker also challenged the conventional religious faith and the idea of God as an uniquely male and white figure. This is illustrated in Celie's Letters to God, in which she battles with her own convictions and ultimately finds a more personal and intimate relationship with a more comprehensive and powerful concept of God.

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The socio-cultural or political contexts in which Celie pens her epistolary letters to God and her younger sister are the identical to those in which literary of Alice Walker's nineteenth century forebears wrote. Alice Walker has claimed that being an Afro American woman author, is an evolution from an incredibly tormented and troubled history. The novel's mode of narration is strongly tied to the explorations of identity and history.

> ***For Maroula Joannou, Celie's folk speech plays a crucial role in shaping responses to a novel so frequently celebrated for its cross-cultural appeal: it is one of several factors that prevent readers from adopting Celie's narrative as one of female oppression. Walker's use of letters places the novel in the epistolary tradition but '[t]he reader is made critically aware of the dangers of universalizing white women's experience and of the distance which separates Celie's use of the vernacular from the elegant sentiments which characterized the earlier letter writers.' (Rachel Lister,P.62)***

The fact that Celie speaks in her own unique dialect is important in shaping readers' perceptions of The Colour Purple. It also prevents readers from viewing Celie's story exclusively as one of female subjugation. The novel's use of letters adheres to a literary tradition, but it also demonstrates the risks of believing that Celie's experiences are the same as white women's, and shows the differences between Celie's crude language and the refined writing of earlier letter writers.

Alice Walker's creativity is found in her recasting of the genre traditions of the mawkish novel. In contrast to the gallant knight who arrives to rescue of the damsel in trouble, Mr- appears to marry and violate Celie brutally. She defends herself in the novel with the assistance of a sisterhood of Afro American women, not the gentle knight.

Walker recounts Celie's story of repression and humiliation, offering insights into the minds of the suppressor and the oppressed. Depicting the lust, crudeness and brutality of the Afro American man venting his frustration on women in American racist society, she also illuminates how women's passive subjugation to male aggressiveness only worsens their crisis of existence. This just fuels the fire of the desire of the black man, reducing the woman to a mere commodity to be used in the way that he wishes. Their remaining silent and

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submitting to various forms of male aggression only serves to deprive them of their human dignity and liberty altogether.

In The Color Purple, we see how Afro American males believe that they have the right to dominate a woman's mind and body. This was demonstrated to be partly because of their self-subjugation at the hands of the white men and partially because of the role models set by their male family members. It seems to present Celie's capacity for suffering and endurance as one of the most important qualities of an Afro American women, who have been subjected to unspeakable cruelty for centuries. However, the author's repudiation of this response becomes clear in her portrayal of its debasing effects in Celie's life. The more she surrenders, the more brutalization and dehumanization she is subjected to. Only by learning to withstand and transform herself that Celie become the heroine of the story.

Celie grows up in an uneducated, impoverished and cruel environment. Celie's mother proven unable to cope with the physical and mental strain.

> ***Celie's mother becomes mentally unstable but is wooed & married by a man more interested in her trim (small, neat, white) Victorian house, fields & property than he is in her or her two daughters, Celie & Nettie.(Valerie,P.222)***

The explanation implies that Celie's mother is mentally unstable and that the man who marries her is more interested in her wealth than in her. The man in particular is more interested in Celie's mother's property than in valuing her as a human being or showing concern for her psychological well-being. This highlights the novel's examination of the manner in which females are often relegated to objects or commodities, especially in the framework of a patriarchal system.

Celie's mother's psychological instabilities likely made her incapable of handling her own property, which made her more vulnerable to exploitation by a man who was interested in her property primarily. This dynamic mirrors the experience of many women who are exploited or abused by men who use their financial or social power to control or manipulate them.

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Her husband, Celie's father, had been murdered by whites, leaving her distraught and utterly shattered. Alfonso takes advantage of her misery and helplessness. He marries her only to satisfy his sexual desires. He turns to her daughter Celie, who not only bears the burden of household chores, but also has to satisfy Alfonso's unfulfilled sexual desires, finding her inadequate to his excessive and violent needs. Celie is 14 when her stepfather, whom Celie thinks is her father, rapes her.

> ***Celie's mother dies angry at Celie &, because she's been warned by her stepfather not to tell anyone (but God) who fathered her children, she dutifully writes letters to God.(Valerie, P.222)***

She is the victim of rape and must bear it all in silence. She was raped several times and became pregnant twice. Even the children she had with Alfonso were taken away by him for sale. She is forced to suffer his sexual violence and also subjected to constant verbal abuse. Without any resistance or protest, she suffers all these humiliations.

The fact that she is no more than a passive receptacle for her husband's lust is further demonstrated by her sexual life with him:

> ***"Now, now, I say. Sleep on it some, maybe it come back. But I say this just to be saying something. I don't know nothing bout it. Mr._ calm on top of me, do his business, in ten minutes us both sleep".(CP,41)***

The above line provides a strong and disturbing description of Celie's marital sexual and psychological abuse. It expresses the feeling of helplessness and distress she experiences, as does the mental disassociation she has learned to use as a coping strategy. That she can fall into sleep after the act suggests she has learned to disconnect from her body and her emotions, a normal response to the trauma. The line illustrates the prevalence of misogyny and sexual assault that has been experienced by women throughout history, and the importance of voicing and protecting survivors of abuse.

Walker's description of the loveless and joyless sexual relation between Albert and Celie, suggests the inhuman effect it has on both the victim and the victimizer.

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Walker's letter reveals how Celie's life has been transformed into a kind of virtual punishment by her husband. Celie suffers multiple forms of abuse, both physical, sexual and psychological. Her husband treats her like a slave, forcing her to work long hours, to cook, to clean the house and to take care of the children. He is also verbally aggressive with her, always humiliating her and trying to make her feel unworthy.

Celie's punishment is "virtual" in the sense that it is not a formal legal punishment, but rather a form of social control imposed by her husband. He isolates her from her family and friends, denies her right to education or any form of self-expression, and constantly belittles and demeans her. This effectively confines Celie to a kind of virtual prison, where she is rejected agency, equality, and individuality.

Celie tries to survive by numbing herself to the pain of her husband's sexual frenzy and aggression. She is incapable of rebelling or resisting. She simply gives in and faces the physical and sexual attacks like a dead tree. Her misery is made worse by the insensitive and irresponsible nature of her husband. She is often physically, morally and emotionally exploited, abused and threatened with violence.

Celie's mother in The Color Purple is not only exploited and degraded herself for lacking inner strength, but is in a way partly responsible for Celie's untold suffering. Her mother is an example of utter helplessness and defeat rather than a source of hope and affirmation. Celie sees her own mother as an object who passively suffers exploitation and assaults. She cannot even think of a way to survive other than to resign herself to her tormentors. Now came to the stage of puberty and unaware what being a girl in a sexist and racist Afro American society means, having received no education from her mother about the dangers she must face further. For Celie, her mother is virtually nonexistent, unable to protect her from her husband's sexual assaults. On the contrary, Celie's mother's passivity heightens Celie's struggles and pushes her into greater difficulty. Celie is forced to replace her mom as an object for Alfonso's lust. Dreadfully, Celie's mother does not even bother to protest against her daughter getting exploited and impregnated. She is relieved to be free of Alfonso's harassment:

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> ***"My mama, she fuss at me an look at me. She happy, cause he good to her now".(CP,5)***

Because of her oppression and exploitation, the reader is initially inclined to sympathize with her. However, this sympathy diminishes as the reader continues to critically examine her role and personality. Surely this is because the way Celie's mother responds to the pressures of circumstance is a complex one for the author herself. Walker seems sympathetic towards her plight, while subtly criticizing her lack of sight, her nervousness and her sense of responsibility as a mother towards her daughter. The fact that the bond between mother and child has a crucial part to play in the "flowering of womanhood" is a well established psychological fact. Celie's blossoming as a woman is greatly aided by the female bond.

Celie preferred the companionship of women to that of her spouse, Albert, and found great contentment in the society of Shug and Sofia. She also keeps in touch with her sister Nettie through correspondence. Celie only finds the courage to stand up and break out of the cycle of violence with the support of other powerful women, such as her friend and lover Shug Avery. This bond with the other girls allows Celie to develop as a complete person. According to Walker, a woman has the fortitude and perseverance to pursue her own personal growth.

> ***Walker's descriptions of Celie's bonding, first with the biological mother of infancy and later with suitable mother surrogates, is psychologically realistic and ranges from the ministrations of Celie's younger sister Nettie, to Kate and Sofia, and to Shug's facilitating Celie's sensual awakening to adult female sexuality and a healthy emotional life. This "female bonding," which occurs over an extended period of time, enables Celie—a depressed survivor-victim of parent loss, emotional and physical neglect, rape, incest, trauma, and spousal abuse—to resume her arrested development and continue developmental processes that were thwarted in infancy and early adolescence.(Proudfit,P.99)***

This is what we find in Celie. Although Celie's experience is the best illustration of this facet of Womanism, there have been novels about the psychological and physical evolution of Afro

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American women before The Color Purple. In reality, Celie's tale is about one single woman's defiance of the prevailing pattern of patriarchal beliefs about women's role in and out of the home.

Celie's growth as a complete woman is aided by Nettie, Shug, Kate and Sofia. Celie's quest to find her identity: Exploring a Psychoanalytic Interpretation of the Structure of Alice Walker's The Color Purple," citing the work of several psychologists who insist on the significance of the role of the mother in a woman's maturation, Charles L. Proudfit suggests that the female protagonists in The Color Purple who affect Celie's development function at some point as surrogate mothers. Celie's washing and combing of Shug's hair is one of the many overt references to such a bond:

> ***"I work on her like she a doll or like she Olivia - or like she mama. I comb and pat, comb and pat. First she say, hurry up and get finish. Then she melt down a little and lean back against my knees. That feel just right, she say. That feel like mama used to do. Or maybe not mama. Maybe grandma". (CP, P.56)***

Charles L. Proudfit suggests that the other females, in particular Shug, function as Celie's maternal surrogate, by providing her with a safe and nurturing environment, reflects a thematic concern in the novel about the importance of physical contact and intimacy, particularly among women. Celie' s careful and nurturing care of the other character's hair constitutes a form of attachment and closeness between the two women, and is used as a way for them to bond and build confidence.

By looking to her mother figure, she is enabled to see and reflect on herself in a more favorable light. This, therefore, assists Celie in her search for her own sense of individuality or authentic self. In this way, Proudfit highlights the significance of The Colour Purple psychologically in understanding the development of a woman. So the achievement of this ***'brilliant psychological novel of development'*** *(35),* as Proudfit describes it, is very significant in terms of 'the psychological understanding of a woman's growth'. The most important thing in any woman's life is her inner self, and therefore the book is quite justifiably concerned with this enigmatic internal *existence, as the psychologists call it:*

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"To the Spirit:

Without whose assistance

Neither this book

Alice walker

Would have been

Written". (The Color Pumle, frontpage)

The way in which Walker has portrayed Celie's mother and her response to the conditions of her life shows her ability to imbue situations and characters with deeper and more intricate and remarkable.

The works of an Afro -American women have explored the role and place of motherhood at length, and have provided an excellent critique of this area of the lives of Afro American women. It is too much for them to deal with the challenges presented by the circumstances of their being and they tend to cope with the constraints they face by resorting to the strategy of silent suffering and passive submission to the forces of subjugation. According to Walker, for women to be free and whole, the realization of the importance of self and identity is essential. Walker's fictional narrative is also permeated by the relationship of the self to the outside world. Walker has dedicated herself to the cause of Afro-American women, and her works are first and foremost about Afro -American women.

Their novels and short stories feature an impressive variety of mothers, providing new insights into their behavioral patterns. African American Mothers are highly protective, either by attempting to protect their offspring as long as possible from the punishments associated with their disadvantaged status, or by giving them skills of self-reliance and empowerment so that they can defend their own. Celie's abusive husband, Albert treats her like a slave and only marries her to take care of his children. He is in love with Celie's sister Nettie and tries to keep them apart. Shug informs Celie that she saw Mr ____ hiding letters, and Celie discovers her husband Albert, who is concealing letters from her sister Nettie. She

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has every intention of killing him with his razor, but Shug stops her. She then sets out on a quest for freedom from him, both mentally and physically. Her efforts succeed and Albert joins her and decides to be in a relationship with her. She is aware of herself and her value and nourishes it to become a complete woman. She is aware of herself and her value and nourishes it to become a complete woman.

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CHAPTER-4

Bird in a Cage: Empowerment and Emancipation in Maya Angelou's Autobiographical Explorations

Maya Angelou fiercely resists and protests against the denial, the dispossession, the suppression and the inhumanity to which black women are subjected. She is deeply concerned about, and highly critical of, the prejudicial way of looking at Afro American women by male chauvinists when it pertains to Afro American women.

In Angelou's view, in a patriarchal structure, men and women are judged in different ways rather than by the same criteria. In her first literary work, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings", Angelou employs the metaphor of a wounded caged bird. This bird symbolizes a deep yearning for freedom. It struggles against the imprisonment imposed by racial, socio-economic and sexual oppression.

Angelou's distressing encounters in America have reinforced her understanding of the profound isolation suffered by black girls because of their gender and physicality. Inspired by Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem "Sympathy", Angelou intentionally chooses the title "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" for her autobiography. In this way, she places herself at the center of a narrative that continues through her entire series of autobiographical works. Maya Angelou uses the striking image of a caged bird, inspired by Paul Laurence Dunbar's poem of the same name. This metaphor, which represents the struggle for freedom and self-expression in the face of social constraints, serves as a poignant symbol throughout the book.

The poem starts,

> **“I know why the caged bird sings, alas.” That line would become the title of Angelou’s first autobiography. She would open with these sentences, “What you looking at me for? I didn’t come to stay. It was Angelou’s way of saying that no matter what you thought of her situation, she was headed for better days”. (P.67 Brown Agins)**

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In both Dunbar's poems and Angelou's memoirs, caged birds symbolize individuals who are oppressed and confined by various forms of discrimination, such as race, gender and class. Through her personal journey of self-discovery and resilience, Angelou illuminates the yearning for freedom and the desire to escape the limitations imposed by these overlapping systems of oppression. Its song is an emotional representation of hope, resilience and defiance. The caged bird's song of freedom resonates with the experiences of many people who are discriminated against on the basis of multiple aspects of their identity.

> **"*Elizabeth Fox-Genovese writes eloquently about Angelou's image of the cage: "Unbreakable bars closed black communities in upon themselves, denying both the communities and the individuals who composed them access to the surrounding white world…. The cages constrained but did not stifle them*"(P.107, Lupton)**

Overall, Angelou uses the image of the birdcage as a powerful means of conveying themes of repression, resistance and the quest for freedom in the face of social obstacles.

The metaphor of the caged bird is a powerful way for Angelou to describe the struggle of African Americans in the USA. Her fight goes far beyond the personal experience and it represents the collective battle of the whole race of black women. Her purpose is to break the barriers and constraints of society that have kept black women in the cages of poverty, racism, sexism, gender discrimination and subjugation. Angelou envisages a world where black women are free from the shackles of race, gender and class through a series of autobiographical novels.

Maya Angelou brings the harsh reality of the segregated South to life by immersing herself in the black community of Stamps. Her frank depiction of racist individuals and the widespread animosity of southern whites against African Americans reveal the brutal nature of the racial divide. Through these experiences, Angelou goes on a transformational journey, gradually gaining insight into the strategies and survival techniques necessary to navigate a racist societal structure.

Angelou discovers a way to "sing" despite the heavy weight of oppression. She stands up to her oppressors and rises again and again after every defeat, relentlessly questioning the bars

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of the metaphorical cage, echoing Dunbar's depiction of the bird. Maya Angelou's writing encapsulates the struggle of every black girl's growth in a hostile American milieu. By emphasizing the challenges and difficulties that black girls face in their upbringing, Angelou emphasizes the universal nature of this plight.

Maya Angelou's "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" is, in fact, the story of Maya, a young black girl who grows up in the American South in the 1930s. The complex narrative is made up of the rich tapestry of community life, the influence of religious communities, and the power dynamics within their families and communities.

By grounding the narrative in the 1930s American South, Angelou aims to provide readers with a historical and cultural framework that helps them to appreciate and understand the difficulties experienced by Maya and other black Americans.

In her series, Maya Angelou's protagonist undergoes a transformative journey from feelings of helpless anguish and hate to the acceptance of subtle forms of resistance. By defying social and cultural standards and striving to break down barriers, Angelou strives to establish a space for women in a male-dominated society, eventually liberating from patriarchal socio-cultural structures and power relations. It is through her self-determination that she became a role model for the entire community of black women, infusing her life with a purpose and a sense of independence.

In the twentieth century, it was Maya Angelou's destiny to assert her humanity and individuality in the midst of great progress, multiculturalism and America's global leadership. As a black woman, Maya Angelou has faced a number of challenges arising from political, social, economic, religious and gender-related issues. Maya Angelou's seven-volume autobiography serves as a transformative rendering, in which she translates and sings the epic story of struggle, survival and triumph.

Maya Angelou exhibits immense courage and an indomitable will to overcome all kinds of adversity and triumph over tough circumstances. Maya Angelou proudly declares her to be a phenomenal woman and affirms her psychological strength, unwavering determination and unique personality. Through her writings and actions, Maya Angelou has encouraged others to embrace their own strength, willpower, and ability to love and empathize.

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Maya Angelou's journey to greatness unfolds in a challenging and adverse environment, and is primarily driven by her tireless dedication and hard work. Maya Angelou's extraordinary journey is an inspiration and a poignant reminder of the transformational power of self-belief, knowledge and persistence in the face of adversity.

Throughout her journey, she confronts multiple forms of hardship, oppression and discrimination, including racism, sexual assault, a sense of displacement resulting from the diasporic experience, exclusion, segregation, limited job opportunities, and unemployment and gender stereotypes, among others.

Deprivation refers to the state of being abandoned or neglected that Angelou experiences as she faces adversity and is forced to navigate difficult circumstances. Racism plays a major role in this dehumanization, as Angelou faces prejudice and discrimination on the basis of her race.

Diasporic Consciousness refers to Angelou's awareness of her African roots and the sense of displacement that follows her as she navigates different cultural and geographical spaces.

Maya Angelou's incredible journey of self-discovery involves profound shifts and transition. Maya Angelou's determination to express herself leads her down adventurous paths that take her from a position of hatred to an embrace and love of life. She progresses from a mindset of pessimism to an embodiment of unwavering optimism, seeing the world through a lens of hope and opportunity.

Throughout her journey, Maya Angelou rediscovers her sense of purpose and meaning, moving from a place of insecurity to one driven by a clear mission and purpose. No longer neglected, her talents and contributions are increasingly recognized and celebrated through nominations and honors. Her journey is an inspirational testament to the power of resilience, reflection and personal growth.

Maya Angelou progressively realizes the inherent nobility of every human being, the immense value of democracy, the immense joy of education, and the delight of being an avid reader, and the flourishing that comes from being a writer. Through her writings and actions,

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Maya Angelou uplifts and inspires others by demonstrating the essence of these values and principles.

Maya Angelou's path serves as a testament to the power of personal growth and realization as she embraces the essence of humanity, democracy, education, reading, writing, and the noble pursuits embodied in the American Constitution.

In the specific context of Maya Angelou's life, trauma played a vital role in shaping her experiences and outlook. Maya Angelou's life was preceded by a childhood rape syndrome, a horrific occurrence that had a profound and lasting impact on her. The trauma she endured as a consequence of economic hardship, social exclusion and racial discrimination exacerbated her psychological and emotional struggles. Maya Angelou's life exemplifies the complex interactions between traumatic experiences and their impact on mental and the emotional well-being.

In the novel I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou reflects on the experiences of her childhood and the struggles of black women in a racist and sexist America. Through her stories, Angelou attempts to give voice to the challenges and experiences of black women, eventually finding a sense of identity and dignity in a society that continues to be racially and sexually discriminatory. Examining her own childhood experiences, Angelou brings to the reader's consciousness a poignant and profound account of the injustices, prejudices and societal obstacles she confronted as a young black girl.

Angelou uses resistance as a powerful tool in her struggle against patriarchal standards in America. Angelou's storytelling allows the previously silenced and marginalized gendered subaltern to speak for themselves. It enables them to transcend the barriers of gender and culture and to be heard.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings' opens with Maya, the central character, struggling with her feelings of self-hatred. Maya Angelou's nostalgic reminiscence of a significant event in her childhood, an Easter Sunday spent at the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church. She recalls an Easter Sunday she spent at the Coloured Methodist Episcopal Church, and expresses her joy at the new Easter dress Mama gave her.

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> ***" I knew that once I put it on I'd look like a movie star. (It was silk and that made up for the awful color.) I was going to look like one of the sweet little white girls who were everybody's dream of what was right with the world. Hanging softly over the black Singer sewing machine, it looked like magic, and when people saw me wearing it they were going to run up to me and say, "Marguerite [sometimes it was 'dear Marguerite'], forgive us, please, we didn't know who you were," and I would answer generously, "No, you couldn't have known. Of course I forgive you." Just thinking about it made me go around with angel's dust sprinkled over my face for days". (CB P.6)***

Maya often spoke candidly about her infantile insecurities and struggles with her physical appearance.

Angelou has revealed that when she was a very young girl, she wanted to be a blonde, blue-eyed, white girl.

Growing up in a predominantly white society, this desire stemmed from societal standards of beauty and the internalized racism she encountered. The desire to be "blonde-haired, blue-eyed, white-girl" can be considered to express their longing for acceptance, a sense of belonging and an opportunity to escape the racial prejudice they had encountered. Angelou's yearning to look different may also have been inspired by the limited representation of black beauty in the media. The preponderance of white beauty as the norm left little room for diverse depictions of beauty, which further reinforced the idea that blackness was less desirable or even unwanted.

Here, we can attribute Freud's fascination with aggressiveness in transference in his Civilization and Its Discontents (1929),

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> ***"Showing that the kind of aggression we imagine to be at the root of the struggle for survival is not what is at stake in them. The notion of aggressiveness corresponds, on the contrary, to the rending of the subject from himself, a rending whose primordial moment comes when the sight of the other's image, apprehended by him as a unified whole, anticipates his sense that he lacks motor coordination, this image retroactively structuring this lack of motor coordination in images of fragmentation".(P.303, LACAN)***

Her experience fuelled her longing to wake up one day transformed into a beautiful white girl. Throughout her autobiography, Angelou powerfully conveys the deep-rooted insecurities she faced and highlights the profound impact that society's narrow definition of beauty had on her sense of self-worth. Her autobiography sheds light on the profound psychological effects of the internalization of negative societal notions of physical beauty and the desire to measure up to a standard that is both unattainable and harmful.

As an adult, Maya Angelou gave an account of her childhood and perceptions in an interview conducted by journalist Bill Moyers :

> ***"I thought [. . .] maybe I'm really a white girl. And what's going to happen is I am going to wake up. I am going to have long blond hair and everybody is going to just go around loving me. [. . .] It's tragic" (Bloom P.117)***

Maya undergoes a complete separation between her personal identity and her reality as a young Afro American girl. This disconnect causes her to have an identity crisis as she denies her true self and longs for an identity that is different, shaped by the white feminine beauty ideals that are dictated by the dominant white and male cultural environment in which she finds herself.

In her imagination, Maya sees her father living in a world of plenty, surrounded by bright orange plantations and looked after by servants, in magnificently decorated mansions that resemble those in the movies. Eventually, Maya discovers that her father's real occupation is

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that of a doorman at the Breakers Hotel in Santa Monica, California. In addition, she learns that his main intention for being in the Stamps is to accompany her and her brother, Bailey, to their mother, who is settled in St. Louis.

Maya is terrified. She thinks about her final meeting with her elusive biological mother. She contemplates pleading with her grandmother to permit her to continue living in Stamps, if that means taking on some of her own commitments as well as Bailey's responsibilities. Still, Maya struggles to gain the courage to envisage a life without Bailey, who is eager to be re-united with her precious "mother dearest". After a heartfelt farewell to Grandmother Henderson and Uncle Willie, Maya leaves Stamps on the day she has to leave. After spending a few more days travelling to St. Louis, Bailey Sr. finally arrives back in California. Maya continues to feel the indifference of the stranger, neither happy nor sad to see go.

Bailey Senior, who represents a mysterious, distant world, is unfamiliar to Maya. In a similar way, the world of Vivian Baxter is also unfamiliar to Maya. Bold, independent and unconventional, Vivian Baxter is Maya's vibrant and attractive mother.

Although she is a trained surgical nurse, she has decided not to pursue her profession due to the lack of enthusiasm offered by the operating theatre and the rigours of the eight to five schedule. Rather, Vivian maintains relationships with various live-in 'boyfriends' who look after her and children. She also makes extra money playing poker in gambling parlours. It is worth noting that Vivian has established a strict behavioral norms for the men in her life, and only allows them to stay in her home if they demonstrate an appropriate level of respect for her rights. This is illustrated by her having cut and shot one who fails to live up to her standards.

For Maya, there is a stark dichotomy between Stamps and St Louis. In Stamps, she finds the presence of Grandmother Henderson and the store, along with a powerful feeling of religious commitment and an assumption of one's position in the community based on their race and secular circumstances.

In St. Louis, Maya is thrust into her mother's world of saloons, pool halls, gambling, a fast-paced lifestyle and intense romantic relations. Compared to what Maya has experienced before, this world is much more relaxed and unconstrained. There is a lack of the usual sets

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of rules and values that her grandmother Henderson had ingrained in her. The range of permissible behaviour is greater. People are less bound by moral or social standards, and relationships are less predictable and secure. For the young Maya, Stamps is a symbol of order and tidiness. The meticulous organization of the store, with its tidy racks, shelves, counters and cutting edges, is a reflection of the general order she encounters in her life. In spite of Maya's pleasant and comfortable lifestyle in St. Louis and her sincere interest in many aspects of urban lifestyle, she has continued to feel as an outsider among strange and unfamiliar human faces. This is mainly due to the fact that the urban society views the individual as an autonomous being rather than a part of a community, and is consequently not able to give her the emotional comfort and support that she longs for. Maya also has a profound sense of alienation in her new circumstances, having spent four years in the seclusion of Stamps. The city overpowers her with its constant clamor, the bustle around her and the unsettling feeling of cramped conditions. Grandmother Baxter's German accent and refined manner reinforce the strangeness. Maya has a hard time bonding with her mother, aunts and uncles, who seem like distant and unfamiliar people. At St Louis, Maya is unable to develop a strong sense of belonging or a sense of stability. She understood that it was not her real home at all:

> ***I had decided that St. Louis was a foreign country. I would never get used to the scurrying sounds of flushing toilets, or the packaged foods, or doorbells or the noise of cars and trains and buses that crashed through the walls or slipped under the doors. In my mind I only stayed in St. Louis for a few weeks. As quickly as I understood that I had not reached my home, I sneaked away to Robin Hood's forest and the caves of Alley Oop where all reality was unreal and even that changed every day. I carried the same shield that I had used in Stamps: "I didn't come to stay." (CB P.59)***

As Maya moves between various temporary residences, she adopts a flexible resilience that functions as both a protection and a means of coping in an unsettled environment. Angelou skillfully captures the feeling of strangeness in the city, expertly using her artistic skills to retain a child's viewpoint while relating this specific period of her early life.

Race :

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The autobiography of Maya Angelou explores the notion of racism as a socially constructed label, invented primarily by white people to rationalize their oppression and control over black communities. Also addresses how resistance allows people from racially segregated communities to cultivate an identity termed "Blackness". This whole concept of embracing blackness ultimately allows people of color to regain and reclaim their sense of self-image and cultural identity. The main character of the autobiographies, Maya, is a symbol of every American black person who has experienced racism at some point in their lives. Black people suffer the humiliating effects of racism, being unfairly evaluated and judged solely on the basis of their skin color by a society that predetermines their value.

Race is a social construct, categorizing individuals based on things like their biological descent, skin color and other characteristics. This categorization creates inequalities and advantages between different racial groups and leads to the granting of rights and privileges.

Race is a construct. It is shaped by inherited characteristics, including ability, character and habits. They can also be affected by factors like skin color, cultural background, location, language and faith. The concept of race is fairly clear and is used primarily by geneticists and they defined race as :

> ***"A race is an isolate or a group of isolates for which the frequencies of specific genes are more or less different as compared with other groups of isolates". (Dahlberg)***

Racism is the assumption that people who belong to a particular group or community have similar qualities, characteristics and capacities that set them apart from other races and make them either better or worse than others. The underlying ideology of racism is about dividing and discriminating against people on the basis of their race or ethnicity. Historically, blacks have suffered most from racial prejudice and discrimination.

In various aspects of social life, racist ideology manifests itself. It perpetuates expressions of hatred and prejudice through biased practices and permeates the actions, customs, ideologies and institutions of particular communities or groups.

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In the complex account of the evolution of racial differences presented in his 1897 speech, the ecological nature of Du Bois's theory of race was evident.

Du Bois defined a race as

"a vast family of human beings, generally of common blood and language, always of common history, traditions and impulses, who are both voluntarily and involuntarily striving together for the accomplishment of certain more or less vividly conceived ideals of life". (Du Bois P.8)

These characteristics are actually more representative of an ethnic group, contrary to the belief that people of a certain race have a common language, traditions and culture. By denying radicalized individuals the opportunity to resist racism, white Americans as a racial group have maintained their dominant position.

In order to discourage Black resistance, White people use various discursive strategies. One of these strategies is to accuse Black people of practicing racism in their own right when they resist White hegemony. White individuals aim to maintain and perpetuate the transmission of racism by framing resistance to racism as part of a carefully constructed racist discourse.

Racism can be viewed as a Western agenda that upholds stereotypical representations of black people, thereby reinforcing their marginalized position in the society.

For historically oppressed Black people, who have endured slavery and exploitation at the hands of Whites, resistance to racism is vital to their survival and liberation. In order to achieve freedom from systemic oppression, they reclaim their powerful identity of Blackness through resistance. By embracing blackness, people of color can affirm their dignity, cultural heritage, and equal rights. It is a powerful tool for challenging and dismantling racist patterns, leading to social justice.

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Maya, the central character in Angelou's autobiographies, is a symbol of the experiences of every black person in America who has been a victim of racism at some point in their lives.

Her autobiographies chronicle the journey of many black people as they move from oppression to empowerment through resisting and empowering. Angelou celebrates her blackness as a positive part of her identity through her own life experiences. She reacts to racists with optimism rather than resentment. She embraces her blackness as a defining feature rather than seeing it as negative.

In her autobiography, "I Know Why the Caged Bird's Singing", she describes the obvious racial differences in Arkansas, a racist region, as white people have negative ideas about black people in the region. Maya, like other black people, feels trapped in a racist world. As the narrative unfolds, Angelou comes to understand the oppressiveness of the white system and gradually begins to develop strategies for navigating and surviving within it. Her autobiographies are a powerful demonstration of the importance of resistance to oppression and the emergence of strength and resilience. Through their stories, they provide a valuable set of lessons on how to face and overcome the many problems and challenges presented by a racially unfair society. Her journey from a status of helpless fury and resentment to different forms of subtle resistance is described in her autobiography. The collective experience of every black individual in America is represented by the metaphor of the caged bird she discusses.

In Maya Angelou's autobiography, she is portrayed as a character close to the heart of active resistance and protest against racial discrimination. Mrs Henderson is portrayed as a pragmatic woman whose resilience, courage and calm ensured that future generations survived and triumphed. Angelou's portrayal of the strong and united African-American community in Stamps is a reflection of how African-Americans stand together in the face of oppressive institutions and reject passivity in the face of racism. This underlines her determination to challenge systems of oppression with collective actions and perseverance.

Her autobiographies, introduces her readers to two different modes of resistance that have been used by African Americans to fight racism: silent resistance and active protest. She uses them to illustrate how African Americans responded to racial injustice. The journey starts

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with a muted form of protest in response to abuse at the hands of whites, and ultimately leads to explicit resistance by black people to racially discriminating actions. Mama Henderson's non retaliation can be seen as a strategical way of maintaining dignity, asserting values and avoiding empowerment of the aggressors. Resisting direct ridicule in a passive way helps to avoid escalating the situation, to reject stereotypes and to maintain personal integrity.

Maya is of the opinion that it is morally wrong to show disrespect to her grandmother, Momma, who is a well-respected African-American mother in Arkansas.

Mama was the only black storekeeper in town and the only woman, no matter what race, to give money to the poor in the depression. Maya is convinced that her mum is being mistreated solely because of her race. There are no other considerations.

> ***"Before the girls got to the porch I heard their laughter crackling and popping like pine logs in a cooking stove. I suppose my lifelong paranoia was born in those cold, molasses-slow minutes. They came finally to stand on the ground in front of Momma. At first they pretended seriousness. Then one of them wrapped her right arm in the crook of her left, pushed out her mouth and started to hum. I realized that she was aping my grandmother. Another said, "Naw, Helen, you ain't standing like her. This here's it." Then***
>
> ***she lifted her chest, folded her arms and mocked that strange carriage that was Annie Henderson. Another laughed, "Naw, you can't do it. Your mouth ain't pooched out enough. It's like this." (CB P.28)***

Maya witnesses a disturbing incident involving her grandmother, Momma. A group of white girls approach Momma, pretending to be serious at first. They make fun of Momma's appearance and make derogatory comments about her physical features.

Maya is deeply frustrated and feels a strong feeling of resentment towards her own race as she witnesses this scene from a distance. Maya's first reaction is to retaliate by throwing stones at the white girls, but she remembers Mama's advice to avoid getting involved with white people.

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When Maya sees Mama respond politely to the girls' taunts, she feels a deep sense of embarrassment.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, is a stark reminder of the segregation and ingrained racism of Arkansas. The narrative sheds light on the miserable way in which white people were perceived and treated by black people in this racist context. Slowly but surely, Angelou gains insight into the oppressive white system, feeling trapped in a world of racism along with other black individuals.

A significant incident of racial prejudice occurs when Mr Lincoln, the only white dentist in Stamps, declines to treat Maya's aching tooth. Maya's grandmother had earlier offered him an interest-free loan when he was in a difficult financial situation, so this incident is all the more distressing. In spite of this act of generosity, Mr Lincoln's refusal to provide dental care to Maya on the basis of her race is a clear illustration of racial bias and discrimination.

The doctor's discriminatory behaviour towards Mamma Henderson reveals his deep-seated racism:

> ***"She had this toothache purt' near four days now, and today I said, 'Young lady, you going to the Dentist.'" "Annie?" "Yes, sir, Dentist Lincoln." He was choosing words the way people hunt for shells. "Annie, you know I don't treat nigra, colored people." "I know, Dentist Lincoln. But this here is just my little grandbaby, and she ain't gone be no trouble to you …" "Annie, everybody has a policy. In this world you have to have a policy. Now, my policy is I don't treat colored people." (CB P.151)***

Momma Henderson is deeply distressed by this blatant racial prejudice, despite the fact that she is one of the wealthiest blacks in the community and has provided significant support to the dentist throughout the Great Depression. She had expected the Dentist to treat Maya as a gesture of kindness, to thank her for all she had done to help in the past. But the dentist's egotistical character and racial bias gain the upper hand, overlooking both the severity of Maya's pain and the support that Mama Henderson had offered during the dentist's difficult days. Without any hesitation, simply because Maya is a coloured girl, the dentist rejects her without hesitation.

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When Momma expects the dentist to treat Maya as a token of gratitude for her previous services, the racial discrimination she faces becomes particularly devastating. The selfish white dentist refuses to provide services to Maya, despite the severity of Momma's pain and her support during a difficult time. This incident illustrates the dentist's blatant disregard for Momma's contributions, and shows him directly discriminating against Maya because of her race.

"I didn't ask you to apologize in front of Marguerite, because I don't want her to know my power, but I order you, now and herewith. Leave Stamps by sundown." "Mrs. Henderson, I can't get my equipment …" He was shaking terribly now. "Now, that brings me to my second order. You will never again practice dentistry. Never! When you get settled in your next place, you will be a vegetarian caring for dogs with the mange, cats with the cholera and cows with the epizootic. Is that clear?" The saliva ran down his chin and his eyes filled with tears. "Yes, ma'am. Thank you for not killing me. Thank you, Mrs. Henderson."
(CB P. 153)

In this scene, the author, Angelou, uses the technique of stream of consciousness to describe Maya's inner thoughts and fantasies as she waits for Momma outside the dentist's office. Maya's belief is that Mama will handle the situation with care and sensitivity, with an understanding of the possible impact it could have on Maya. Maya's thoughts allow the reader to understand how she interprets Momma's actions. Maya assumes that Momma wants to deal with the situation in a way that preserves her dignity and at the same time does not cause Maya any undue emotional distress.

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Angelou provides insight into Maya's view of the situation and her interpretation of Momma's intentions by presenting Maya's thoughts in a stream-of-consciousness style. Maya's fantasies or dreams of her grandmother, Mama, confronting the racist dentist come from Maya's deep desire for justice and retribution. Maya longs to see the dentist called to account for his discriminatory behaviour and to see Momma assert her power in the situation.

Maya imagines that mum will use her influence with the dentist to remind him of the financial support he received from her during his own hard times. This imagined conversation allows Maya to mentally place Momma in a position of strength and authority. She confronts the dentist with his unjust actions.

In addition, Maya's fantasy is not just about the demand for repayment of the loan. Her fantasy is that Mama will demand not only the repayment of the loan, but also the accrued interest, which the dentist has so conveniently overlooked or forgotten. This aspect of the fantasy underlines Maya's desire for the dentist to fully acknowledge the damage he has caused and to do reparation. Maya's daydream allows her to feel empowered and cathartic. It allows her to fight the injustice she's witnessing and to imagine her beloved grandmother, Momma, standing up to racism. Maya finds comfort and a way to mentally confront the discrimination she faces in her daily life through this imaginative exercise. Maya seeks comfort and release from the feelings aroused by the racism she experiences by imagining Momma in a position of power and influence. Through her imaginary scenario, Maya expresses her deep longing to see her grandmother, Momma, regain her power in the face of racism. In a world where racism and discrimination often makes her feel helpless, Maya uses her daydreams as a means of challenging the status quo and finding a sense of control over her own emotions and experiences. Eventually, Maya's fascination with her mother's strength and her own commitment to the fight against racial injustice are the focus of her daydreams.

In her autobiographies, Maya Angelou emphasizes that it is not enough to rely solely on a subtle form of resistance in the face of racist oppression. Angelou suggests that resisting is not a spontaneous reaction, but a more strategic approach that takes time to develop. A more effective strategy for success is seen in this gradual process of resistance. Throughout Angelou's writings, she emphasizes the significance of resistance as the primary tool for the

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poor black community to use to combat and ultimately end the racial discrimination they endure.

In addition, Mama underlines the humiliating and damaging effects that African Americans suffer at the hands of others by warning Maya to stay away from white girls. Yet in another instance, Momma recommends that Maya not to interact with white girls because of their inherent potential to humiliate and damage black people. Momma takes the necessary precautions to protect Maya from the damaging effects of racism, understanding its pervasive nature. She directs Maya to remain outside of the room and wait for her while she has a private conversation with the dentist. Momma's purpose is to protect her granddaughter from the harsh and painful effects of the racism that has had such a powerful impact on her own community. From her own experiences, Mama clearly understands the dangers and consequences of racism, especially for a young black girl like Maya. Momma's actions and understanding make her a role model for Maya and underline her dedication to protecting Maya's well-being and fostering her understanding of racial inequity. This shows Momma's role as a role model for Maya, understanding the grave dangers racism poses to a young black child's wellbeing and growth. Maya Angelou and many other black females are depicted as oppressed by their lack of power, their skin color and their slave position in the ruling supreme white society. Maya Angelou, in her works, courageously tackles rape and sexual violence, successfully breaking the silence surrounding men's control over women's lives. Maya Angelou deliberately includes the accounts of rape and sexual violence in her culturally contextualized life narratives in a manner aimed at confronting and challenging patriarchal ideologies. She empowers herself and her characters to articulate their resistance to the dominant social structure through these narrative choices. By illuminating these traumatic experiences, Maya Angelou sheds light on the underlying power dynamics and systemic oppressions that exist, and provides a platform for women to assert their agencies and challenge the oppressive norms imposed by patriarchal society.

African American women's autobiographies have been concerned with the exploration and understanding of women's agency or transformational power by focusing on previously taboo issues such as rape or sexual abuse. These stories aim to challenge the notion of female

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victimhood, which portrays women as powerless and passive objects of 'male desirability'. These autobiographies also explore the complexity of the consent and contract aspects of relationships, showing how these factors can combine both women's agency and subjugation, leading to a complicated blend of consent and resistance. As an extreme form of sexual exploitation, rape is universally recognized.

Feminist criticism has been careful to situate rape and the act of resisting it within the broader framework of feminist politics. They have carefully investigated the significant role of sexualized violence in women's lives and have sought to challenge the predominant notion that engaging with rape narratives through writing or re-reading is merely for titillation. Rather, they recognize the significance of dealing with these issues as a vital step in the dismantling of hegemonic beliefs and power relationships.

Bell hooks embraced a broader and more inclusive perspective. This included:

> ***" the politics of racism and sexism from a feminist perspective . . . the impact of sexism on the black woman during slavery, the devaluation of black womanhood, black male sexism, racism within the recent feminist movement, and the black woman's involvementwith feminism. It attempts to further the dialogue about the nature of the black woman'sexperience . . . so as to move beyond racist and sexist assumptions . . . to arrive at the truth of our experience" (P.34 Williams Tyrone)***

In many societies worldwide, women are socialised to remain silent when it comes to sexual violence. Social norms, patriarchal structures, and the stigma and shame associated with being the victim of sexual violation all contribute to this expectation of silence. In her stories, Maya Angelou is fearless in confronting this untold and unspeakable reality. By exposing the cruelty and injustice inherent in a society that perpetuates silence and denial about sexual violence, she throws light on the harsh truth that countless women endure.

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Powerful rape narratives, which function as a form of resisting patriarchal constructs, are prominent in the literature of African American women. They question and speak out against the sexual violence they endure, highlighting the need for female empowerment and to resist male supremacy and control. In Maya's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, the issue of rape is an extremely powerful and prevalent notion that has a strong influence on the narrative, although it is dealt with very briefly. At the center of the story are two incidents in which Maya Angelou was sexually abused by Mr Freeman. These traumatizing experiences are metaphorically portrayed, enabling Maya to express her pain while avoiding the explicit details of how she actually feels. The issue of rape remains a prominent and powerful feature throughout the autobiography, leaving a lasting impact on the development of the reader's understanding of Maya's journey. It recounts Maya's experience of being raped as a child and her ensuing resistance to sexual abuse. She subsequently continues to explore the devastating subject of the sadistic sexual violence of marriage, including acts of marital rape, in her subsequent autobiographical series. When Braxton questioned - Knowing that you might be criticised, why did you choose to write about rape?

Maya states that :

> ***"The rape of a child is the cruelest action because it has so many implications. The child is, herself, himself, the potential rapist. Many people who have been raped quite often go to violate everything: themselves first, and then their families, their lovers, then the community and the society. It is so awful.] can say, honestly, that I don't believe a day has passed that I haven't thought about it, in something 1 do, in my own sexuality, in my own practices. So I thought to myself, "You write so that perhaps people who hadn't raped anybody yet might be discouraged, people who had might be informed, people who have not been raped might understand something, and people who have been raped might forgive themselves." (P.23, Braxton)***

The power dynamics and systemic oppression that women, particularly black women, encounter from the author's perspective. The author draws parallels between men dominating women and the capitalist class dominating workers, and emphasizes the intertwined power of these relationships.

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In similar ways to how masters have historically enslaved their workers, black women are being exploited by men of both black and white origin. The male/female relationship is compared to that of master/slave, employer/employee, and white/Black, further highlighting the power differential and oppressive nature of marginalized identities.

This literary work is the story of Maya's transformative journey. Throughout her life, from childhood to adulthood, Maya has faced many challenges and adversities. The result was a loss of identity and a deep-seated desire to find a place where she really belonged - a place called "home" where she would experience the unconditional love of a family, the emotional and psychological consequences of societal standards of beauty, and the associated feelings of inadequacy and alienation. This longing suggests the importance of emotional attachment, kinship and a sense of belonging to one's wellbeing and personal growth and portrays the multi-faceted challenges faced by women of colour who are confronted with issues of self-perception, identity, the search for a sense of home and the desire for familial love.

When, at the tender age of eight, she became the victim of sexual abuse at the hands of her surrogate father, Mr Freeman, the author's sense of self was completely shattered.

As a result of these traumatic experiences, Maya Angelou was not able to speak for several years and confided only in those she trusted most, especially her brother Bailey.

Her portrayal of the rape of an 8-year-old black girl reveals the harsh conditions facing numerous black women in the United States. This poignant narrative illuminates a different form of exploit suffered by women of coloured skin: the sexual violence and abuse suffered at the hands of men, irrespective of their racial heritage. Through her courageous revelation of these distressing events, Angelou brings awareness to the widespread plight of black women and the dire need to combat such systemic inequalities.

Maya's first violent experience comes during a trip to St. Louis to visit her mother, Vivian Baxter, and her boyfriend, Mr. Freeman. Maya, who suffers from a deep fear of the dark and is haunted by recurring nightmares, is allowed by Mrs Baxter to use the same bed as the two of them. When Mr Freeman, in a terrible act of treachery, sexually violates Maya while she sleeps with her mother, this apparently innocent accommodation takes a dark turn. Maya's unhappy destiny is to be raped by a man who also controls her mother by exchanging sexual

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favors. Maya's fear of the dark, and her mother's decision to let her sleep in her bed, came from a position of caring and love. Young, innocent Maya is abused and raped by the man who owns her mother and uses her for sexual pleasure.

This highly traumatizing incident constitutes the most violent form of abuse that Maya has ever been subjected to in her entire early life. It is noticeable in Angelou's life narrative that there is no evidence of meaningful friendships or significant relationships with her peers during the 8 months she lived together with her mother in St. Louis. This silence emphasizes her alienation in an unaccustomed surroundings and isolation from a supportive peer group.

Young Maya's life is forever changed when Mr Freeman moves in. He tricks her by seeming to play with her innocently and no evil is intended. Although he is not her biological father, Maya thinks of Mr Freeman as her father. When he rapes his own stepdaughter Maya, he proves to be the worst possible father figure. She is not aware of Mr Freeman's real intentions. She looks to him for the love and caring of a father.

Maya is longing for the physical closeness, the tenderness and the comforting embrace of a fatherly figure. In her previous world of Bailey, food, Mum, the shop, books and Uncle Willie, there has been a significant absence of a fatherly figure. This absence leaves Maya yearning for the love and care that only a father role can offer to fill the gap in her youthful world and bring a feeling of completeness to her life.

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> ***"Before, my world had been Bailey, food, Momma, the Store, reading books and Uncle Willie. Now, for the first time, it included physical contact. I began to wait for Mr. Freeman to come in from the yards, but when he did, he never noticed me, although I put a lot of feeling into "Good evening, Mr. Freeman."(P.62 CB)***

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As a child, she is not able to understand his motive, and she allows herself to be deceived. Due to her inability to exert any control over him. She surrenders to him because she feels powerless to resist.

Many young black girls, like Maya, who lack the emotional fulfillment of caring and concerned parents, often seek emotional support in school or through play. But Maya has a very different experience, finding little fulfilment in these areas. Notably, Angelou's life story fails to mention any positive peer relationships while she lived with her mother in St. Louis for eight months. Not only does she feel displaced in her new surroundings, but she also experiences a sense of alienation due to the lack of supportive peer relationships. Maya's participation in the deeply disturbing and ethically ambiguous actions of Mr Freeman gives rise to a wide range of feelings that are overwhelming. Confusion, embarrassment, shame, disgrace and a lingering sense of guilt result from the disorienting implication she experiences. Mr Freeman threatens to silence Maya by threatening to kill her brother Bailey if Maya reveals her traumatising rape to anyone.

> ***"We was just playing before." He released me enough to snatch down my bloomers, and then he dragged me closer to him. Turning the radio up loud, too loud, he said, "If you scream, I'm gonna kill you. And if you tell, I'm gonna kill Bailey." I could tell he meant what he said. I couldn't understand why he wanted to kill my brother. Neither of us had done anything to him. (CB P.66)***

Mr Freeman uses a scary intimidation to silence Maya from disclosing the truth about the rape in a terrifying turning point. Fearing for her brother's safety, Maya succumbs to pressure and lies during Freeman's trial, falsely claiming the rape was the first of his inappropriate behavior.

Mr Freeman's actions are probably informed by the absence of strong protections for black women in America at the time. It is disturbing to note that he is being released from prison after only a short period of imprisonment for his serious crime of child molestation. This is symbolic of the widespread problem of the sexual violence and harassment of black women in America. Women of colour suffer from abuse and harassment at the hands of patriarchal

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institutions, regardless of whether it is committed by white or black men. Unfortunately, Mr Freeman is murdered by one of Maya's uncles as a result of Maya's false testimony. She felt that her uncle's desire for revenge for the harm he perceived to have caused Maya indirectly led to her lying in court and the violence against Mr Freeman. Blaming herself for the consequences of her courtroom deception, Maya is wracked with guilt as she sees her own words as a cause of his death.

> ***"Even Bailey was frightened. He sat all to himself, looking at a man's death—a kitten looking at a wolf. Not quite understanding it but frightened all the same.***
> ***In those moments I decided that although Bailey loved me he couldn't help. I had sold myself to the Devil and there could be no escape. The only thing I could do was to stop talking to people other than Bailey. Instinctively, or somehow, I knew that because I loved him so much I'd never hurt him, but if I talked to anyone else that person might die too. Just my breath, carrying my words out, might poison people and they'd curl up and die like the black fat slugs that only pretended". (CB P.72)***

The very presence of white people in the courtroom further adds to Maya's traumatizing experience. Vowing to confide in only her brother Bailey, Maya's commitment to keeping the rape a secret is strengthened by this ridicule.

The sexual violence perpetrated on Maya by Mr Freeman has left her with deep scars and a fearful state of mind. As she confronts her past and strives to resist the moment, Maya's spirit is broken and she is overcome by fear and emotional upheaval.

Angelou states about her traumatic child abuse:

> ***Even the nurses in the hospital had told me that now I had nothing to fear. "The worst is over for you," they had said. So I put the words in all the smirking mouths. (P.69 CB)***

In her autobiography, Maya decides not to speak after her rape. She is afraid of the devastating effect of words and the traumatic effect of the rape on her psychological state.

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A poignant representation of psychological oppression is Maya's decision to remain silent after being raped. Maya's silence becomes an eloquent expression of the psychological torment she suffers, as she refrains from sharing her traumatizing experience with any other person other than her brother.

Over time, however, Maya realises that her silence is ultimately a threat to her personal space and autonomy. As a result, she finds the will to break her silence. She embraces her opposition and rejection as a means of regaining her voice and asserting her personal identity. Maya's choice to withhold her voice after the rape functions as a symbolic representation of psychological oppression, emphasising the wider sense that oppression goes far beyond physical deprivation, legal inequality or economic exploitation. It underlines the idea that repression can be manifested in many ways, including the oppression of one's thoughts, emotions and independence.

Henke stated that:

> ***"the etiology of psychosomantic vulnerability, a syndrome that gives way to masochistic revictimization. In the wake of post-traumatic stress disorder, the rape victim continues to suffer such low selfesteem that she unwittingly reduces her body to a specular object, an 'other' from which she feels coolly detached"(P.57,Martin)***

Maya's attempt to escape the real world and remain invisible illustrates how the rape act, a sign of the power dynamic, not only causes physical and psychological damage, but also breaks the victim's social ties. After the rape, Maya withdrew from speaking to others, cutting off her desire to communicate. The traumatic event also undermined her relation with her mother, resulting in a rupture in their relationship.

The potential of individual actions of resistance as a means of confronting patriarchal ideology is exemplified in Maya Angelou's narrative.

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These small actions of resistance serve to disrupt and weaken the mechanisms of oppression, becoming a survival strategy for the woman rather than a transformative action.

Maya Angelou redefines her sense of self by asserting her position as a subject through her writing, despite the social expectancies placed upon her as a black woman, which carry both traditional obligations and cultural significance.

Through the narration of her own story and the breaking of her silence about her experience of rape, she is a strong symbol of survival. Throughout her autobiography, Maya uses the act of talking as a powerful means to challenge the oppressive powers that seek to confine and silence her. It is through her words that she claims back her agency, that she asserts her right to be understood and to shape her own narrative. It is an inspiring example of the transformative possibilities of individual action in the face of institutional oppression.

Carrying a heavy burden of guilt for Mr Freeman's murder, Maya decides to isolate herself and maintain a silence to avoid the possibility of another tragedy. After being raped, she decides to leave the city and moves back to Stamps to live with her grandma in search of comfort and a sense of security.

Maya embraces silence as a transformative force and begins to rebuild her life. She finds comfort in books and goes on a self-discovery journey, using her imagination and creativity to recreate a new world for herself.

Mrs Bertha Flowers is an influential figure in helping Maya rediscover her self-confidence and voice during her difficult time. Maya is given the opportunity to express herself and finds solace in poetry and books through Mrs Flowers' support. By encouraging Maya to read aloud, Ms Flowers helps Maya slowly regain her lost confidence, self-respect and power of speaking and singing.

> ***"Come and walk along with me, Marguerite." I couldn't have refused even if I wanted to. She pronounced my name so nicely. Or more correctly, she spoke each word with such clarity that I was certain a foreigner who didn't understand English could have understood her.***

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> ***"Now no one is going to make you talk—possibly no one can. But bear in mind, language is man's way of communicating with his fellow man and it is language alone which separates him from the lower animals." That was a totally new idea to me, and I would need time to think about it. (P.80 CB)***

Mrs Bertha Flowers is crucial in helping Maya regain her ability to speak and to find her voice through her guidance and support. Through Mrs Flowers' counselling, Maya begins to regain her ability to speak. She also develops the resilience to resist the traumatic consequences of her rape. Mrs Flowers becomes a strength for Maya, helping her to overcome the silence and trauma she previously suffered.

Mrs Flowers can be aptly described as a mother figure, as she takes on the role of psychotherapist, nurturer and resisting mentor to young black women like Maya. Through her guidance and assistance, Mrs Flowers plays a crucial role in saving Maya from a potentially bleak future. She helps her to break free from the shackles of silence and muteness. Mrs Flowers' motherly efforts assist in transforming and re-birthing Maya. Mrs Flowers instills a sense of pride and confidence in Maya's gender and racial identity and gives her a new sense of life.

Ms. Flowers helps Maya nurture their mental abilities, allowing them to understand life more deeply and to be critical of the world they live in. By mentoring Maya, Mrs Flowers introduces her to the realm of resistance, empowering her to resist racial and gendered oppression. Ms. Flowers guides Maya and equips her with the means to challenge injustice and advocate for equality.

Guided by Mrs Flowers, Maya comes to understand resistance and sheds her inferiority complex. By empowering Maya to regain her self-esteem, Mrs Flowers appears as a symbol of resistance. After the traumatic experience of rape, Mrs Flowers acts as a bridge between Maya's inner and outer worlds. She helps her to master language and inspires her to express her painful experiences through poetic expression. Through the mentorship of Mrs Flowers, Maya is able to find her voice and is empowered to sing her touching songs and to heal through the power of words.

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Angelou shares her personal experiences to highlight the complex traumatic issues. Through her narrative, her aim is to raise the awareness of the issue and to prevent such atrocities from happening to other black women. Angelou wants to empower those who have been victimized to gain a broader understanding of the issue, to stop blaming themselves and to place the responsibilities on the culprits.

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Chapter-5

From Struggle to Strength: Mother-Daughter Bonding in Maya Angelou's Memoir

The seventh book by Maya Angelou, "Me& Mom" explores the changing dynamic of Angelou's relationship with her mother, Vivian Baxter. "Mom & Me & Mom illuminate the complexity and intricacy of Angelou's relationship with her mother. This book examines how this significant family relationship shaped Angelou's life and identity, particularly in the context of the African-American experience. It shows how they overcame obstacles and persevered through difficult times, highlighting the resilience and strength of both Angelou and her mother. She allows readers to gain a more profound understanding of the intricacies and challenges faced by African Americans in their quest for self-acceptance and self-discovery by examining her relationship with her mother in the context of the African American experience.

Maya Angelou examines the deep meaning that mother and daughter have in African-American cultures. It emphasizes the crucial role that Afro American mother's play in instilling values in their daughters and providing them with the tools to navigate life in the midst of disadvantage. By envisioning a promised land of freedom and fulfillment, it also touches on the aspirations for a future without pain and suffering. The burden of instilling values of dignity, hard work and resilience in Black children fell on Black mothers because of the systematic undermining of Black men's authority, masculinity and their constant involvement in often meaningless or unfulfilling work. Survival in a hostile white supremacist world required this.

African-American mothers who had to deal with the cross-cutting challenges of sexism and racial discrimination were confronted with cultural assumptions and stereotypes that interfered with their capacity to communicate valuable life lessons effectively. These societal boundaries prevented them from imparting real wisdom and knowledge to children. The transformative journeys and profound experiences of African American women as mothers have been largely underexplored, and their depth and implications have not been adequately

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portrayed. In an educational environment in which the dominant culture has marginalized them and deprived them of their legitimate place in society, these women have served as guardians of values. A variety of practices are used to preserve and pass on their beliefs and spiritual beliefs to future communities when examining the mother-daughter relationship among black women.

Black feminist theory provides a valuable framework for understanding the complexity of the black mother-daughter relationship in Mom & me &Mom by Maya Angelou. It highlights how race, class and gender intersect to shape their experiences and interactions. Through this lens, readers gain insight into the struggles, victories, and personal transformations of the characters, which enriches their appreciation of the narrative.

Autobiography has become a powerful medium for black women to capture the bittersweet realities of their formative years, especially in terms of their relationships with their mother figures. The complexity of their relationships is expressed in these narratives in an intimate space.

Through memoirs, the writers recounted their childhood and the valuable lessons their mothers taught them. This was informal education designed to equip daughters with the strength to cope with difficult situations. The autobiographical works by black women are homage to their maternal models and a testament to the teachings that inspired pride in their black identities and enabled them to sustain resilience in the face of the triple oppressions of gender, race and class.

The autobiographies written by black women have always been centered on the deep bond between mother and daughter. Within the narratives, the powerful figure of black mothers has been central in providing their daughters with the clarity and understanding to confront the complicated problems of racial and gender subjugation. It is also important to realize that the relationships between black mothers and their daughters were not characterized merely by love and trust. On the contrary, a number of mixed and contradictory feelings and tensions were evident within this dynamic.

It is indisputable that there was also hostility and resentment within such these kinds of relationships, which often expressed itself in the instances of manipulation and control

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exercised by the mothers on their daughters. Adding to the complexity of these dynamics were instances where daughters tacitly agreed to regressive traditions and practices. Mom & Me & Mom, Maya Angelou's memoir, is an account of her evolution from a position of innocence to a place of greater self-awareness. It explores Angelou's personal experiences of a challenging upbringing and the obstacles she had to overcome, but also deals with her ultimate reconciliation and the development of a good relationship with her own mother. This observation emphasizes the transformational nature of Angelou's recollection, as she confronts the complications of her education and emerges more enlightened and knowledgeable.

Released on the occasion of Maya Angelou's 85th birthday, Mom & Me & Mom, her seventh autobiography, explores a deeply personal and uplifting journey centered on her close and intimate relationship with her mother. Throughout her life, Maya Angelou encountered many extraordinary women. Each had their own unique strengths and an indomitable spirit that refused to give in to oppression. Of these influences, her grandmother, Annie Henderson, was especially important to her childhood and would eventually shape the course of Angelou's entire life.

Annie Henderson is a strong personification of an ancestor, and represents the archetype of the black female matriarch who vigorously defended the welfare of her family and the communities in which she lived. She exudes strength and resilience. She is the owner of a general store in Stamps. Angelou's first contact with the external world takes place in the privacy of her grandmother's store, a significant setting in the formation of her identity. Angelou's grandmother's guidance was valuable to her entire life because it was based on a truthful depiction of motherhood that was not romanticized. Anne Henderson took on the task of responsibly providing for young Angelou and her sibling Bailey, giving them a much needed feeling of security and protection.

Angelou's grandmother carefully raised both Angelou and her brother, Bailey Jr, and instilled in both the wisdom to avoid dealing with and arguing with white people. As well as being a mother figure to her own children and children's generation, Anne Henderson is a mother

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figure to the entire black community of Stamps. Her impact and influence were especially apparent during the Great Depression.

She was a resourceful and practical woman who knew how to deal with difficult issues with wisdom and determination. During a showdown, when pro-white girls taunted Angelou, Anne Henderson showed remarkable composure. She calmly directed Angelou to go back into the house and not to get involved in the situation.

> ***"Some neighbors saw how Baily acted in front of white folks downtown and reported to Grandmother. She called us both over and said to Baily, "Junior" – her nickname for him – "You been down town showing out? Don't you know these white folks will kill you poking fun of them?"***
>
> ***"Momma"- my brother and I often called her that –"all I do is get off the street they are walking on. That's what they want, isn't it?" (Me& Mom P.7)***

This incident illustrates her strategic approach to distancing herself from whites, which she also wanted to teach her children.

Angelou's memoir portrays her mother, Vivian Baxter, as a strong, independent and dynamic woman, and offers a moving and insightful assessment of her. Angelou pays an emotional tribute to her mother, thanking her for shaping her life and for the extraordinary growth of their bond over the years.

Throughout her recollections, Angelou eloquently acknowledges her mother Vivian Baxter's strength and vitality, honoring her as a woman of empowerment and dynamism. Vivian Baxter, vivacious and independent, epitomized energy, independence and toughness, attributes she imparted to her daughter.

Angelou admits that her mother played an important role in her life, despite her struggles to care for young children. She is grateful to have been sent to live with her grandmother in her early years. Angelou emphasizes the profound influence her mother has had on her adult life, fostering a profoundly strong bond between them.

Annie Henderson and Vivian Baxter, Angelou's grandmother and

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mother, combine warrior courage with humor and wit. Both dare to leave

the beaten roads and, as Angelou writes about her grandmother, "cut herself

a brand-new path" and further continues as "Finding no possibility of being hired at the Stamps cotton gin or lumber mill, she made the factories work for her, by setting up

a lunch stall. Vivian Baxter, too, "practiced stepping off the expected road and

cutting herself a brand-new path any time the desire arose"(P.52, Bloom)

Vivian was brought up in an infamous family known as the "Bad Baxters", known for their violent and aggressive behavior. For Vivian, violence was ingrained in her family as a legacy from generation to generation, a dominant aspect of their heritage. With a remarkable lack of hesitation, Vivian fearlessly participated in acts of aggression alongside her brothers.

"She led her brothers to the local park and made them watch as she climbed the highest tree. She picked fights with the toughest boys in her neighborhood, never asking her brothers to help, counting on them to wade in to the fight without being asked". ((Mom&Me.P.4)

Vivian's participation in such activities was encouraged in the Baxter family, where daughters had the same status as sons. If any rough play ended without reciprocation, her father, who listened intently to her tales of violence, disapproved.

Her family, especially her father, placed great trust in Vivian. As the oldest, she was trusted with the role of encouraging heightened strength and aggression in her brothers.

Vivian stood out among her brothers as a prime example of indomitable strength and courage, demonstrating a striking lack of fear of any and all. After Vivian's marriage, they moved to California, where Angelou and her older brother Bailey were born. As time went on, however, a clear split began to appear between Vivian and her husband as a result their relationship began to disintegrate. Children were sent to stay with their grandmother. Being

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with her much-loved grandmother provided Angelou with a great sense of joy and comfort, as she had a deep respect and admiration for her grandmother. As a result, she was very resistant to the idea of leaving her grandmother's side to be with her own mother.

Angelou's brother, however, was so anxious to reunite with their mother that Angelou grudgingly agreed to go with him to California. When she was 13, Angelou was reunited with her mother, a prospect which was filled with anxiety. She felt that their bond was tenuous and delicate, and the anticipation of their meeting weighed heavily on her.

Through Grandmother Henderson's nourishing presence, Angelou and Vivian's relationship begins beautifully and auspiciously. A mother's deep love for her children can only be understood by another. Angelou's autobiography describes the pain of separation from her grandmother, who played the role of mother to her children during her formative years.

Her grandmother not only facilitated Angelou's move into her mother's care, but stayed on for several days to ensure the children's comfort in their new circumstances.

When Mama brought up the subject of leaving for Stamps, a deep sense of gloom enveloped Angelou's heart. Ironically, when they first meet at the station, Angelou's mother's extraordinary elegance and beauty is so striking that she feels completely unworthy of becoming her daughter.

Desperate to escape the embarrassment she felt, Angelou was overwhelmed with a sense of inferiority and wanted to disappear into the ground. But in spite of her self-image, Vivian wrapped Angelou in a warm embrace, overwhelming her with tender hugs, kisses and words of praise, recognizing her for the greatness and beauty she was.

It took a conscious and deliberate effort on both sides to establish a sense of connectedness and mutual trust because of her mother's absence during the crucial early years of Angelou's life.

Angelou's mother showed understanding and acceptance when Angelou initially refrained from addressing her as "mother", understanding that a relationship neglected during the formative years would take time and patience to develop. Without rushing or imposing

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expectations, she recognized the need for space and permitted their attachment to develop naturally.

Vivian went to great lengths to make her daughter feel happy and comforted. She used fun and playful gestures, such as making funny facial expressions, which had the intended effect of getting Angelou to laugh. This was an important breakthrough for Angelou, as it was the first time she felt truly relaxed and well received in her mother's company.

Her mother's admiring comment about her beautiful smile deeply affected Angelou and boosted her confidence. Angelou's use of this experience highlights the importance of parental recognition in the development of a child's self-confidence. When parents recognize and acknowledge the positive qualities or achievements of their child, it instills in the child a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. That will enable the child to face and meet the various challenges that arise throughout life. By emphasizing the importance of parental recognition, Angelou underlines the role parents' play in helping their children to feel valued and resilient.

In a curious turn of events, Angelou found that Bailey was a perceived possible rival for her mother's affection. The fear that the maternal love that had at last come to her after a decades-long absence would now be shared with her brother left her with a sense of anxiety and insecurity.

With Bailey at the centre of her life, Angelou experienced a strong sense of ownership. But as her relationship with her mother and her brother grew more complicated, so did the dynamics between them.

Watching Bailey's preoccupation with her mother at the train station, Angelou soon realized that she would never play a significant part in either her mother's or her brother's affections.

By carefully observing how mum interacts with people, a child will learn the important lesson of appreciation and recognition of the qualities of those closest to her. This understanding is the result of the daughter's close observation of her mother's actions and behavior.

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Angelou is grateful to her mother for the care and nurturing she provided for her children, and finds joy in witnessing her mother's appreciation of her grandmother's efforts and wisdom.

Angelou and Bailey were deeply curious about why their mother, despite her obvious love and care, chose to leave them and become lonely.

When Bailey dared to ask this question, she made no hue and cry and replied in a very calm and composed manner:

> ***"Your father and I began to dislike each other almost as soon as we got married. Then both of you were born and we had to think about what we would do with you. We tried for nearly a year but we realized there was nothing that could keep us together. We fought like wild animals. His mother wrote us and said to send the children to her. When we got her letter, we had an evening without cursing each other out and slamming out of a restaurant". (mom &me P. 22)***

In openly acknowledging the conditions that led to her making the decision to send her children away, Vivian showed remarkable honesty. By confessing all her misdeeds to her children, she courageously admitted her mistakes and took responsibility for her actions. Acknowledging that she had once resorted to hitting Angelou when she had annoyed her, was a particularly courageous act. By accepting and acknowledging these past acts, Vivian shows a readiness to face her errors and to engage in an open debate with her children, thus fostering a platform of sincerity, understanding and mutual growth in their relationship.

It takes a woman of strong character to admit that she had not been willing to take on the role of a mother, but once she had become one, she loved her children with all her heart and above everything else. Vivian made it very clear to her children that she wished to tell them what happened and that she did not regret having done this.

Angelou reveals the outspoken and brave nature of her mother and emphasizes her deep desire to see her children grow up to be morally upright individuals. After their Grandmother

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Anne's departure, Vivian gave her children invaluable advice, emphasizing the importance of maintaining reputations beyond material belongings. She told them never to turn to lies or deceit and, above all, encouraged them to find humor in their own mistakes rather than ridicule others. Through these lessons, Vivian taught her children to be honest, sincere and empathetic, and set them on the road to becoming compassionate and responsible human beings.

Initially, when Angelou is reluctant to call her mother "Mother" and addresses her as "Lady", Vivian is not offended or insulted. Years of separation, a sense of being abandoned, and feelings of loneliness have had a profound effect on her daughter, and she recognizes and understands this. Recognizing that adapting to a new family environment takes time and adjustment, Vivian refrains from imposing expectations or demands on Angelou. Instead, she accepts the approach Angelou has chosen and supports her patiently as she undergoes the process of accepting and adjusting to her changed surroundings. Vivian is sensitive and receptive to the emotional needs of Angelou, and is willing to facilitate her gradual integration into the reunited family.

Vivian willingly gave Angelou and her brother the space they needed, recognizing that they needed time and space to adjust to the changing dynamics of their relationship. As a result, it was only natural for Angelou to grow, little by little, in a deepened regard and love for her mother.

It is noteworthy that although Vivian was an outspoken mother, she practiced modesty when it came to excessive love and care. She also allowed her children to feel independent and allowed them to live as they wished. She did, however, demonstrate her role as a directing and guiding presence in their lives by intermittently offering valuable words of advice.

Vivian taught her children to respect all those who come before them, irrespective of profession or social rank.

Angelou admires her mother for having accepted her true self unreservedly. She has fond memories of her mother's lack of shame in openly admitting her own experience of incarceration. Angelou cherishes her mother’s frank admission that prisons were for people, not animals. Her mother's openness and honesty resonated with Angelou, exemplifying her

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unwillingness to be judged by society and her willingness to confront and accept her past mistakes and experiences. Angelou finds her mother inspiring and admirable for this genuine acceptance and authenticity.

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Angelou's mother, like many other moms, put her daughter's safety and well-being first. Angelou tells of one incident in particular that affected her deeply and taught her an important lesson. During the Second World War, when whiskey was in short supply and heavily restricted, Angelou had secretly taken some of her mother's liquor out of the cupboard in order to give it to underage street children on Sundays. Her mother was furious and chastised Angelou in front of other women for what she considered to be stupid and careless. The incident showed how much her mother cared about the welfare of her daughter and how determined she was to make sure Angelou understood the importance of responsible and decent behavior. It was a demonstration of the lengths to which her mother was willing to go in order to protect her and teach her a sense of responsibility for her actions.

When Angelou realized her mistake and asked for forgiveness, her mother gladly forgave her. The incident was never raised again. Though Angelou had all but forgotten this specific event, she consciously recounts it to readers to emphasize the significance of recognizing wrongdoing and the importance of sincerely offering an apology. It also reminds her that it is important to take responsibility for your own actions and to seek redemption.

She writes:

> ***"there are times when no one is right, and sometimes among family and children, no one can admit that there is no right, and that may be at the***

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same time there is no wrong. But in this case, I was wrong and I appreciate Vivian Baxter for being big enough to accept my apology."*(MM 37).*

Angelou tells the reader that her mother encouraged her to choose the career that she wanted to pursue. Her mother honored her decision and gave her the freedom to pursue it when Angelou expressed her desire to become a streetcar conductor. As well as giving her approval, her mother also helped Angelou to buy the uniform she needed to play the part. Her mother also showed her unconditional support by driving Angelou to the beach where she would begin her duties as a streetcar conductor and picking her up at the end of her shift. This example demonstrates the support, practical assistance and commitment of her mother to Angelou's chosen path, and shows her commitment to her daughter's well-being and success.

Angelou's relationship with her mother developed into an admiration for each other after she secured her job as a streetcar conductor. As a mother, knowing that the circumstances surrounding Angelou's job could be challenging, Vivian was concerned for the welfare of her teenage daughter. To ensure the security of her daughter, Vivian even carried a gun to counter any possible threats. Vivian's commitment to Angelou's well-being is exemplified by this display of maternal concern and protection.

Vivian sat down with Angelou to talk about the experience when she decided to quit her job and focus on completing her education. Emphasizing the importance of learning and growing from every situation, she genuinely wanted to know what Angelou had learned from the job. Vivian empowered Angelou to achieve her goals by encouraging her to use her inner strength and determination. This relationship mirrors Vivian's role as support and guide in her daughter's life, teaching her the values of perseverance and self-development.

Vivian became concerned and disturbed whenever Angelou decided to stay out later, as she feared for her daughter's safety. In these instances, Vivian's feelings would escalate, causing her to be upset and to use strong and offensive language against Angelou.

This particular incident illustrates difficult issues in family relationships. Papa Ford, who played a caring and supportive role in Vivian's life, tried to intervene and defuse the situation

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during a heated argument between Angelou and her mother. However, Vivian remains defiant and refuses to listen to what he has to say.

However, Vivian is forced to face the consequences of her actions when Bailey intervenes to defend his sister and they both decide to go out of the house. Vivian is shocked by her own aggressive behavior when she sees the physical injuries Angelou suffers, including swollen lips and black eyes. This realization serves as a turning-point, as Vivian admits her guilt and recognizes that she needs to change to repair the relationship.

It shows that relationships can become stronger when the people in the conflicts accept their own shortcomings and show a sincere willingness to do better and to foster a healthier relationship. Her reaction when she sees that her daughter has been harmed shows that Vivian is remorseful and can grow and reconcile with her family.

Vivian's reaction to Bailey's announcement of her intention to leave the house is one of shock at the gravity of the situation. She realizes that their departure will not only disrupt the family dynamic. It will also raise doubts about her effectiveness as a mother. Vivian's sense of identity and her role as a nurturer are challenged by this prospect. As a woman who prides herself on being independent and strong, Vivian finds the possibility of failing as a mother difficult to accept.

In Of Woman Born (1977), Rich defined the institution (as opposed to the experience) of motherhood

> ***"as a powerful form of social control. In patriarchy, she argued, institutionalized motherhood degrades women by reducing them to the status of children: 'unproductive', disenfranchised, economically and emotionally dependent, ghettoized. It is because of a mother's very powerlessness in the external world that the system reproduces her will-to-power in her relationship with her children". (P.164, Heilmann)***

The strained nature of her relationship with Vivian is highlighted by Bailey and Angelou's announcement. It acts as a wake-up call, forcing Vivian to face the implications of her behavior and the impact it has had on her children. Vivian's visceral reaction, as she falls at

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their feet, signifies her desperation to rescue her relationships and re-establish her identity as a loving and capable mother.

This moment underlines the deep emotional investment that Vivian has in her role as a mother, and her desire to continue to connect with her children in a meaningful way. It also highlights the complex dynamics that can arise in any family, where the choices and actions of one family member can have a profound effect on the others.

She begs,

> ***"Please give me a chance. Please. Come in the kitchen and give me a chance" (MM 55)***

It is indeed heart-wrenching to hear of Maya Angelou's personal experience of being sexually assaulted at a young age. Such traumatic incidents can have a significant impact on a person's life, shaping how they feel safe and trusted. As a mother, one can understand Angelou's overpowering need to shield her daughter from similar harm. so it was normal for a mother to be extra careful with her. By her own admission, she had been crazy, but at the same time she could not bear the thought of the rape happening again to her daughter. So she became violent because she wanted to overprotect her.

She reveals her heart**:**

> ***"I was crazy. I was out of my mind. I remembered what that bastard had done to you when you were seven years old. I couldn't imagine someone else taking you, abusing you, and maybe even killing you. I had just left your empty room when I came down the stairs and suddenly you were at the door, opening it with a smile on your face. I had the key ring in my hand with at least twenty keys on it and I hit you without thinking. She turned to Bailey. " I didn't mean to hurt your sister. I beg you to forgive me". Then she began to cry so piteously that Bailey and I left our chairs and arms". (MM 56)***

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Maya Angelou was greatly disturbed by her mother's tearful expression of remorse, and although she wanted her daughter to apologies in the presence of Papa Clidell and Papa Ford, she realized that it was not acceptable for a woman of her status to reveal her vulnerability to others. She is willing to give herself wholeheartedly to the wishes of her children, Angelou and Bailey. However, she would experience a sense of reluctance if she were to relinquish her power in the presence of others. This incident illustrates the tender and loving nature of a mother with her children. Even if she is tougher with others.

Angelou's observation about a mother's multiple roles in her children's life is apt. Through the exercise of control, a mother contributes to shaping the behavior of her child, instilling her values and teaching her important life skills.

The ability to move between these roles of nurture and authority is critical to the effectiveness of mothers in educating well-rounded people. It requires empathy, sensitivity and a deep sense of each child's unique needs and personalities.

Ultimately, mothers' goal is to create an environment that nurtures and supports their children, while at the same time providing them with the skills and values they need to become independent adults.

mother, says Angelou, is important not just

> ***"because she feeds and also loves and cuddles and even mollycoddles a child, but because in an interesting and maybe an eerie and unworldly way, she stands in the gap. She stands between the unknown and the known" (MM 168).***

The power of support and unconditional love is shown in the portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship in this context. Angelou's mother, Vivian, provides unwavering support when she becomes pregnant out of wedlock, which serves to reinforce Angelou's resolve and commitment to face the difficulties of an unwed pregnancy.

Vivian's support is praiseworthy, demonstrating her acceptance of her daughter's predicament and her willingness to stand by her, regardless of societal judgments or perceptions. Vivian

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offers Angelou an important source of emotional and practical support during a potentially difficult and uncertain time by choosing to help her daughter through her pregnancy.

This display of support underlines the importance of a strong support system, especially within the relationship between a mother and her daughter. It stresses the need to nurture relationships based upon love, understanding and compassion. It shows the power of a mother's love and the profound impact it can have on a child's power and resilience through Vivian's unwavering commitment to helping her daughter through this difficult situation.

It also challenges the social stigma and norms surrounding unwed pregnancy. It highlights the importance of supporting and embracing individuals on their unique journey, regardless of societal expectations. Within the context of the mother-daughter bond, it sends a powerful message of acceptance, compassion and empowerment.

Overall, the determined way that Vivian decides to support her daughter through her unwanted pregnancy is a reflection of the strength and unwavering determination that can exist within the mother/daughter relationship, ultimately enabling Angelou to face the world with determination and strength.

The dynamics of the relationship between African American mothers and their daughters are significantly influenced by their specific cultural context. Within this cultural context, there are several factors that strengthen the bonds. Vivian's empowering role in helping her daughter remain resilient is evidenced by her demonstration of strength and support during her daughter's delivery.

A trained nurse herself, Vivian was uniquely equipped to provide the valuable guidance Angelou needed during the birth of her baby. It is likely that without the support of her mother, Angelou would have felt a deep sense of isolation and helplessness at this critical time in her life.

As well as understanding her daughter's situation, Angelou's mother was instrumental to Angelou's recovery from the shame of becoming an unmarried teen mother.

> ***"I thought about my mother and knew she was amazing. She never made me feel that I brought scandal to the family. The baby had not been planned***

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> ***and I would have to rethink plans about education, but to Vivian Baxter that was life being life. Having a baby while I was unmarried had not been wrong. It was simply slightly inconvenient" (MM 70).***

There is a close and supportive relationship between Vivian and her daughter Angelou in this scenario. During Angelou's most difficult times, Vivian has been a source of strength for Angelou. Angelou holds her connection with her mother in the highest regard and believes it to be the most meaningful relationship she has had in her life.

In her own transition to motherhood, Angelou felt a need to become independent and responsible. Her decision to leave her mother's home and forge her own path is the start of a new life. Vivian does not try to stop her, understanding her daughter's desire for independence. Instead, she lets Angelou make her choices for herself and her son.

> ***"You know the difference between right and wrong. Do right. Don't let anybody raise you from the way you have been raised. Know you will always have to make adaptations, in love, relationships, in friends, in society, in work, 'but don't let anybody change your mind" (MM 71).***

Vivian gives her daughter some precious advice before Angelou leaves. This advice is for Angelou's guidance and wisdom that will be of benefit to her in the long-run. The specifics of Vivian's advice are not given in the text, and may be open to the reader's interpretation or imaginations.

On the whole, the nature of the relationship between Vivian and Angelou is one of love, support and respect. Vivian trusts her daughter to make her own decisions, recognizing her need for autonomy. At the same time, as Angelou embarks on her own journey of motherhood and independence, she provides guidance and advice, recognizing the importance of sharing her wisdom and life experiences.

The beauty of a mother and daughter is the capacity to understand each other without words. In the specific case of Angelou, her mother was acutely aware of the fact that Angelou was going through an economic crisis and was experiencing difficulty in meeting her financial

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responsibilities in spite of working two jobs. Angelou's son also had allergies, which cost her great deal of money.

Angelou decided not to ask anyone for help and to endure on her own, despite the difficult circumstances she was facing. Recognizing her daughter's independence and pride, Vivian decided to help by offering Angelou a loan of $1,000. However, Vivian framed it as an investment in her daughter's future, understanding that Angelou might not accept the money directly. It was Vivian's belief that Angelou would be able to repay the loan at her earliest convenience. This situation shows Angelou's self-esteem as well as Vivian's deep respect for her daughter's emotions and autonomy.

In a harrowing incident, Angelou, the daughter, becomes the victim of a brutal assault by Mark Jones, her partner. The violence of the attack is evidenced by the injuries Angelou suffers, particularly to her face and head. While assaulting Angelou, Mark accused her of being unfaithful, suggesting that she went off to see other men.

The episode highlights the deep concerns and worry that Angelou's mother, who is not named, has for her daughter. As she witnesses the aftermath of Angelou's assault, the mother's love and protective instincts come to the fore. Witnessing her daughter's injuries and emotional trauma, the mother's main concern is Angelou's well-being and recuperation.

Mark's attack shows that a controlling and abusive dynamic exists in Angelou's relationship. Mark's violence, coupled with unsubstantiated allegations of adultery, suggests an unhealthy and unstable environment. Angelou's mother, having witnessed the extent of the abuse, is probably experiencing some combination of shock, rage and the deep desire to support her daughter through these trying times.

It is important to note that the information provided does not indicate how Angelou's mother went on to act and support Angelou. This is important to note that further action and support by Angelou s mother is not mentioned in the information provided, but we may assume that her concern and commitment to the welfare and emotional wellbeing of her daughter would likely lead her to take steps to address the situation and ensure that Angelou receives the necessary help and support to recover from the traumatic incident.

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Angelou was violently restrained by Mark, who continued to physically abuse her until she became unconscious. In the midst of this act of violence, Mark experienced contradictory emotions as he both cried and berated his feelings for his harsh and brutal treatment of Angelou. Angelou's mother, Vivian, was so overwhelmed by the sight of Angelou's swollen face and broken teeth that she collapsed and fainted. This was an unprecedented reaction in her life.

After regaining consciousness, Vivian's rage at Mark grew to such an intensity that she swore revenge, saying in no uncertain terms that she would "kill the son of a bitch". Vivian internalised the incident and took full responsibility for it, like many mothers who tend to take the blame for any misfortune that befalls their children, and felt an overwhelming sense of guilt.

It is important to note that the information given does not reveal how Vivian responded to her anger and guilt, as well as resolved the situation. But the depth of Vivian's emotions - from shock and anger to guilt - underlines the strength of her love and concern for Angelou and her desire to protect her daughter from being harmed.

She assures Angelou**:**

> ***"You never have to worry about him again. I put the news in the street. He knows if he ever walks the street in San Francisco, his ass is mine, and I won't hesitate" (MM 89).***

Angelou confesses that she loved her mother the most at the time of this incident,

although she is not sure about the nature of that incident. She ruminates**:**

> **"Was that event incident, coincident, accident, or answered prayer?" (MM 87).**

Angelou's closeness to her mother, Vivian, who disapproved of the union, is reflected in her state of nostalgia following her marriage to Tosh Angelos. Drawing on her own personal experiences, Vivian warned Angelou of the potential challenges and prejudices they would

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face as an interracial couple. Vivian's concerns stemmed from her belief that their marriage would result in the scorn of the white community and the suspicion of the black society. Vivian did not discourage Angelou from performing her duties as a wife, despite the racial divide in her own marriage.

It shows the complexity of the interracial dynamics within Angelou's family and their attitudes towards her interracial marriage. This means that Vivian recognized the significance of honoring one's duties and obligations within a marriage, even in the face of societal rejection.

Angelou is aware of her mother's attempts to maintain a positive relationship with Tosh. Vivian invited Angelou and Tosh to the beach for a drink after learning of the increasing conflict between the two, seeking an opportunity to talk to them. She wanted to ease the tensions in their marriage and provide space for her daughter and Tosh to openly express the pain that was straining their relationship.

She began the discussion in a forthright manner, taking her daughter’s side without mincing any words:

> ***“I do not want to get into your business, but I am on Maya’s side” (MM 112)***

When her mother is present and empathizes with her perspective, a daughter finds comfort in sharing her concerns.

When Vivian inquired as to why she was not happy,

Angelou discloses**,**

> ***“Most of the things I like have been taken away from me” (MM 112).***

She went on to describe the absence of any kind of excitement or pleasure in her

life:

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> ***"I have no friends. Tosh is jealous even of my friendship with Yvonne. He has stopped me form studying dance, he becomes angry if I stop at the record shop, and worst of all I have to lie when I go to church" (MM 112).***

Despite her mother's disapproval of her son-in-law's behavior, Angelou confides in her mother and expresses her deepest feelings. In spite of this opposition, Vivian had no intention of interfering with her daughter's marital life. Vivian counsels Angelou to honor her husband's wishes when she hears his account.

However, the trust in their marriage continued to erode, and Angelou gradually recognized her dwindling desire to save the relationship. However, getting divorced left her completely devastated. What's more, for her seven-year-old son, the thought of getting divorced was horrifying.

Once again, she turned to her mother for comfort and support, which allowed Angelou to regain a sense of normality. Her mother's support was a reminder that remaining in a relationship with Tosh could have alienated her from who she really was. It would also have had serious consequences for Guy, who would have lost the person who had meant the most to him. Her mother helped Angelou rediscover her former selves, which had been suppressed during her marriage.

> ***"For the sake of yourself, you must preserve yourself and for the sake of Guy, you must preserve his mother" (MM 118).***

With her mother's able guidance and reassuring support, Angelou rediscovered her ambition and began to look for work while resuming her dance classes. In due time, she put on a fascinating and seductive performance at the Bonne Nuit Dance Club, which won rave reviews and led to an enticing offer to work from the club's owner. Her mother lifted her spirits, admiring her bravery and spirit of adventure. She also predicted great success for her future endeavors and she asserts**,**

> ***"I am not surprised. You are going far in this world, baby, because you dare to risk everything. That's what you have to do. And if you don't succeed, you also know all you have to do is try it again" (MM 121).***

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For both Angelou and her mother, the opening night of the Purple Onion was a moment of enormous pride. Angelou was being introduced as a Cuban star, well known for her captivating performances of calypso. Vivian, full of pride, summoned her friends and colleagues to be witnesses to her daughter's extraordinary presence. Hearing her mother's words of empowerment fueled Angelou's enthusiasm and determination and was a deeply gratifying experience.

> ***Mother stated, "Now you will see some of the world and you will show the world what you are working with" (MM 126).***

Vivian offered Angelou some advice and suggested that she join the production of Porgy and Bess, which would give her the chance to travel with the company. But because such travel would require her to be away from her son, Angelou had reservations. She was reluctant to be away from her child as a devoted and responsible mother.

Her mother's wise words came to her rescue when she said that

> ***"sooner or later I would have to leave him and that I could not keep him on my hip forever. At least this time he would be left in good care." (MM 127).***

Vivian understood the unique circumstances of Angelou as a single mother without a partner to help raise her son and recognized the importance of empowering Angelou as an independent woman. Regardless of the sacrifices involved, she was fully conscious of the need to priorities Angelou's independence.

Never one to bow to the dominance of the white canon, Vivian was an influential figure. When Vivian reserved a newly integrated hotel for their meeting, Angelou witnessed another example of her mother's fearless behavior. Vivian carried a revolver and was prepared to use it if needed, and the hotel staff were astonished by her boldness.

The following words from her reveal her true persona:

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> ***"If they were not ready for integration, I was ready to show it to them. Baby, you try to be ready for every situation you run into. Don't do anything that you think is wrong. Just do what you think is right, and then be ready to back it up even with your life." (MM 139).***

Her mother's steadfast determination and willingness instilled in Angelou a deep sense of self-confidence, enabling her to face life with unflinching bravery and without allowing her to succumb to fear or doubt. Her mother had a remarkable capacity to enchant people with her elegance and her charm, and to win their love effortlessly. No matter where she went, she always had a talent for making new friends.

She actively encouraged her friends to come together to collect used clothes, ensuring that they were cleaned and repaired before storing them in her Garage for those who needed them. She supported students through grants, and when approached by the Mayor of Stockton, she willingly offered to help an unemployed couple in any way she knew how. The Mayor, who had initially assumed that her mother was white, was taken aback when he discovered Vivian's black heritage and the tremendous impact she was having. This exposure destroyed the preconceived notions about the limits of black women's power. Inspired by her mother's grace, Angelou took on a dignified persona and remained careful never to get involved in anything that might embarrass her son.

Maintaining the integrity of motherhood, her primary goal was to secure her son's path to a respected and honorable life in society, and she steadfastly protected herself from any man who might seek to exploit her.

She was careful not to keep her son in the dark about any romantic relationship she entered into. When she considered a man as a potential partner, she valued her son's opinion and sought his approval. Paying tribute to her mother's influence on her life, Angelou fondly recalls the precious moments they shared, filled with gratitude and deep admiration for her mother.

Angelou asserts that,

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> ***"Escorts were plentiful and satisfying. To keep Guy's respect, however, I never allowed anyone to stay overnight. If I stayed overnight with a friend, I always managed to be home before daybreak. I was learning to write, thanks to the encouragement and guidance of the members of the Harlem Writers Guild." (MM 140).***

On arriving in New York, Angelou's mother took the opportunity to go to Guy's school and personally observe his academic progress. She was filled with a deep sense of satisfaction at his commendable achievements.

From her mother, Angelou learns an important virtue: compassion. In spite of her mother's own illness, she remains devoted to her work as a trained nurse and continues to take care of other patients. One of these patients is Miss Stein, a small white woman with severe memory loss who can only remember small fragments of her childhood.

Angelou's mother's dedication to the care of others in the midst of her own illness is a testament to her selflessness and empathy. It emphasises that even in the face of personal challenges, she places value on helping and caring for those in need. Through the acts of her mother, Angelou learnt the significance of extending care and compassion to others, irrespective of their circumstances.

The lesson of compassion is deepened by the particular case of Mrs Stein, who has lost almost all her memories. This shows that compassion is more than just sympathy or understanding; it is also an active response to the needs of others and the provision of support and comfort.

Through the example of her mother, Angelou comes to understand the importance of compassion and how it affects those in need or distress.

For Angelou, the relationship that exists between life and art is catalysed by Mrs Stein's situation. Angelou notes that art has the ability to transcend human existence, while the light of life eventually fades. Art's permanence reminds us how individuals can attain a form of immortality by creating artistic works.

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Angelou experiences a moment of epiphany, a sudden realisation or deep understanding, as she reflects on this idea. It is this moment that re-connects her with the profound power of art. They realize that art has the potential of transcending the limits of time and mortality.

Angelou probably feels a sense of awe and inspiration at the realisation that art can preserve and immortalise the human experience. She emphasises the importance of artistic expression as a means of leaving a long-lasting impact on the world, even after our physical existence has come to an end.

This new insight can also be a source of comfort for Angelou, recognizing that her own artistic endeavors can provide a legacy, resonating her voice and experience with future generations. It reinforces her belief in the continued power of art to overcome barriers and connect people from different time periods and cultures.

Eventually, Angelou's appreciation for the transformative and immortalizing nature of artistic expression is rekindled by this reflection on the connection between life and art. It becomes the defining event that deepens her appreciation of the importance of creativity and fuels her own artistic path.

Perhaps Angelou's newfound understanding of the importance of her own artistic legacy will give her some consolation.

It is fascinating that Mrs Stein, despite having lost her memory of the most important years of her life, still retains her love of art. With her keen eye, she observes Angelou's emotional reaction to a Matisse painting on the wall. Angelou is moved to tears by the vibrant and exuberant colors in the work.

> ***"Mrs. Stein explained to my mother that sometimes artists respond in very strange ways when they see the work of other artists. Your daughter cried because she is an artist, and she's very very sensitive. I thought of the irony of the women who had forgotten major portions of her life. She had forgotten that she had been married to one man for over fifty years…but she remembered the art". (p.158)***

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The occurrence shows a more profound and superior sort of connection between people and art that which will never cease to be in existence. Angelou's ability to recognize and experience this deeper link with art suggests that she had exceptional quality and perspective that set her above the ordinary. The ability to face challenges without giving in to panic is something Angelou learned from her mother.

She came up against many hurdles that seemed both overwhelming and beyond her ability to overcome while filming her script in Stockholm.

Angelou recognizes her mother as her only source of hope in resolving the difficult position she is in. She requests her mother's immediate presence. When her mother arrives, she assumes a leadership role and helps Angelou to overcome her troubles. By stating that people will show Angelou natural respect if she demonstrates her ability to get the job done, her mother emphasizes the importance of ability and performance in earning respect. Trust and confidence are portrayed in the relationship between Angelou and her mother.

She reassures Angelou and assures her of her unfailing presence and support at this difficult time in her life.

Mother is here, I will look after you and I will look after anybody you say needs to be looked after, anyway you say. I am here. I brought my whole self to you. I am your mother. (P. 166)

As time went on, Angelou and her Mother began to bond more and more. They spend more time with each other and their relationship deepens. Angelou took her mother on a tour of Europe, creating unforgettable moments through their mutual sharing, as an example of their strengthened relationship.

As they travel, they share light-hearted moments, such as when they try to board a plane filled with deaf people. For both Angelou and her mother, this experience serves as a source of amusement and humor. Their ability to derive pleasure from the most unexpected events and to enjoy each other's company is evident in the lightheartedness they share.

The depiction of their relationship underlines the joy and companionship that Angelou and her mother have shared as they have navigated life's experiences between them. Their

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closeness and the strong emotional bond they have developed over time are evident in their ability to find humor and embrace moments of hilarity.

Maya stated**:**

> ***She was there with me. She had my back, supported me. This is the role of the mother, and in that visit I really saw clearly, and for the first time, why a mother is really important. Not just because she feeds and also love and cuddles and even mollycoddles a child, but because in an interesting and maybe an eerie and unworldly way, she stands in the gap. She stands between the unknown and the known. (P. 168)***

Angelou's mother, Vivian, was described as a woman of considerable strength, and Angelou inherited many of her qualities. Angelou admits that, particularly during the difficult times when her marriages ended, her mother's unwavering support and strength were invaluable to her.

Describing her mother as her backbone, Angelou highlights the pivotal role Vivian has played in helping to provide her with emotional support and stability during these difficult times. Without her mother's support and intervention, Angelou feels that she would not have been in a position to get through those difficult times with her dignity intact.

Angelou's mother and daughter's relationship illustrates the crucial role of family support and its ability to empower an Individual to face life's difficulties with courage and dignity.

Freud (1949) wrote that the infant's relation to the mother is

> ***"unique, without parallel, established unalterably for a whole lifetime as the first and strongest loveobject and as the prototype of all later love-relations-for both sexes". Freud did not elaborate on the nature of this early relationship because he believed that at birth the infant's behavior is solely determined by powerful instincts. The Mother's importance is initially as the person who gratifies these powerful impulse". (P.66 BEVERLY BIRNS& DALE F. HAY)***

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It is very important that Angelou also takes on a maternal figure for her mother, and there are instances when she is when she acts as her savior.

In the last stages of her mother's life, Angelou made the courageous decision to move her mother to North Carolina so that she could attend to her mother personally during this difficult time. Angelou's mother had been diagnosed with both lung cancer and emphysema, and was given a prognosis of only three months to live.

By moving her mother into her home to be with her, Angelou is demonstrating her profound love for and her determination to provide comfort and support to her mother in her final days. This very act of bringing her mother into her own home enables Angelou to be physically with her and to provide her mother with the care and support that she needs at this very difficult time.

The choice to personally take care of her mother may have stemmed from Angelou's desire to provide a familiar and loving environment for her mother in the time remaining to her. Angelou's sense of responsibility and the depth of their relationship is evident in her decision to care for her mother in her final months. By ensuring that her mother's remaining days are filled with love, care and dignity, Angelou proves her commitment to honoring and supporting her mother as she confronts the issues of her illness.

As a gesture of affection, Angelou has her room painted in her mother's favorite color, pink. But when Vivian finally arrives, she is too sick to move. She has to be brought in by a taxi driver, assisted by Bailey's daughter Rosa.

In recognition of the seriousness of Vivian's condition, she is admitted to a local hospital the following day so that doctors can monitor her health. Vivian underwent radiotherapy and began as a positive sign of recovery, Vivian's previously bald head has started growing hair again, and Vivian is regaining appetite and gaining weight.

Vivian's strength and sense of humor are maintained to the end, despite her life-threatening illness. She continues to socialize with Angelou and attend church, in addition to undergoing medical treatment. This resilience demonstrates Vivian's remarkable spirit and determination, and her ability to find joy and companionship in the midst of adversity.

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Despite Angelou's efforts to keep her mother comfortable, Vivian's health begins to deteriorate again and she falls into a coma. Angelou does everything in her power to maintain a positive mood around her mother, trying to keep her in good spirit and provide a human link for as much of her life as possible.

Angelou is profoundly appreciative of her mother's influence on her life. It began in her early adolescence. She acknowledges Vivian's exceptional impact by calling her the most wonderful mother, recognizing her enormous contributions and the profound role she had in shaping Angelou's journey.

Angelou continues to provide her mother with love, support and a sense of humor in the face of Vivian's declining health and the difficult circumstances they both face. She cherishes the moments they have shared and strives to maintain her mother's well-being and good fortune until the very end.

A sense of anticipation and anxiety is created by the foreshadowing of her mother's imminent death during the night. Angelou's deep concern and urgency to be at her mother's side is reflected in her urgent rush to the hospital, represented by her driving and running up the stairs. But it ends in tragedy when Angelou goes to her mother's room to find Vivian has already died.

> ***"You have been a hard worker- white, black, Asian, and Latino women ship out of the San Fransisco port because of you. You have been a ship fitter, a nurse, a real estate broker, and a barber. Many men and – If my memory serves me right – a few women risked their lives to love you. You were a terrible mother of small children, but there has never been anyone greater than you as a mother of a young adult."(P.194)***

This sudden, unexplained loss enhances the emotional intensity of the scene and underlines the transience of life. The scene conveys loss, grief and the profound impact of knowing that death ends. It leaves a lasting impression on the reader, demonstrating the raw emotion and deep attachment between Angelou and her mother.

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Other powerful women played an important role in shaping Angelou's life, including her grandmother, Anne Henderson, and her mother, Vivian. Together, these women showed Angelou how to embrace and celebrate womanhood and her motherhood, fostering an atmosphere of awe and respect while instilling in her the courage to face challenges without being intimidated.

Among these influencers, Mrs. Flowers was crucial in bringing Angelou to bookstores. It was through literature that Angelou found solace and strength, providing her with an escape from her feelings of isolation and the agonies of neglect. Mrs. Flowers was empathetic to Angelou's emotional battles and genuinely sought to meet her concerns, offering guidance and encouragement during difficult times.

Mrs Flowers was instrumental in Angelou's realization of her innate creative bent. She inspired Angelou to use her pen as a powerful tool of resistance and protest against social injustice, and to channel her thoughts and experiences through writing. The importance of mentorship and guidance from female role models is underscored by the presence of these powerful women in Angelou's life. In addition to nurturing Angelou's emotional health, she also recognized and encouraged her creative abilities. These women helped Angelou to find her identity, to find her voice and to be a powerful force for change.

This portrait highlights the transformative influence of strong women and the invaluable lessons they taught Angelou. It demonstrates the power of compassion, insight and creative self-expression to foster personal development and resistance, ultimately shaping Angelou into the inspirational writer and activist she has become.

Angelou's life is remarkable not only for her reception of this heritage, but also for her addition of new layers to the notion of motherhood. She takes the heritage of her ancestors and adds her own perspectives and experiences. In doing so, she contributes to the development of the notion of motherhood. Angelou's Autobiography provides a history that traces her journey from innocence to consciousness, from growing up to becoming a young woman. It represents their growth and evolution, both as individuals and as they understand their environment. This autobiography also illuminates her transformation from a state of parental neglect to a deep and close relationship with her mother.

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Angelou's personal journey and the universal themes of resilience, identity and the intricate dynamics of family relations are brought to life through her storytelling. She carries the heritage of her ancestors and her unique personal experiences with her, creating a narrative that will resonate with the reader and explore the multifaceted nature of motherhood and the profound influence it can have on an individual's life. Taken as a whole, the text demonstrates that Angelou's life mirrors a continuum, building a bridge between her ancestral heritage and her own personal development. It demonstrates her ability to contribute to a broader understanding of motherhood and the human experience by not only inheriting and honoring her cultural heritage, but also expanding and redefining it.

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